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THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE LIGHT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE LIGHT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

A Course of Public Lectures
in the University of Leeds

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TO THE MEMORY OF
EMILY FAWCETT
OF BRAMHOPE, YORKS,
BY WHOSE BEQUEST
THE CHAIR OF THE
PHILOSOPHY AND HISTORY OF RELIGION
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS
HAS BEEN FOUNDED AND ENDOWED.

PREFACE

For some years it has been the custom in the University of Leeds for a series of Public Lectures on some Biblical or theological subject to be delivered during the Lent Term, and in my capacity as the first occupant of the Chair of the Philosophy and History of Religion it fell to my lot to undertake the course in the current academic year (1934). The audiences normally are of a varied character, being composed partly of senior and junior members of the University, and partly of educated men and women from the city and the surrounding district. On this occasion, in addition to undergraduates and those of my colleagues who honoured me with their presence, the gatherings contained a goodly sprinkling of clergy and ministers of religion, together with representatives of the scholastic, medical and other professions, business men, and cultivated ladies not a few. The largeness of the audiences at each of the lectures is doubtless to be explained in some measure by the fact that the lecturer was in every sense a "novelty" in this University, but I venture to think it may also indicate a widespread interest in the theme selected for discussion, since the attendance tended to increase rather than diminish as the course proceeded, despite the fact that the last three lectures did not lend themselves to illustration by lantern slides. It is at the request of this audience that I have prepared this volume

for publication, and in the hope that a wider public also may be interested in the subjects brought under review.

In a shortened form, the course was repeated in the Chapter House of York Minster during the ecclesiastical season of Lent. The intelligent discussions on these occasions were an additional proof that Old Testament studies are very much alive in these days, and they revealed on the part of the church-going laity an appreciation of the change in outlook that has taken place in recent years as a result of the application of the scientific method to the study of the Scriptures.

Apart from minor alterations, which in my opinion are always advisable when the spoken word is reduced to narrative form, the lectures are printed here as they were delivered. An educated audience with some historical background was assumed, but it was surmised that only a small proportion would have any technical knowledge of the matters under discussion. Therefore, in the opening lecture, for example, a brief description of the general principles of Old Testament criticism will be found, and while time and space prevent a voluminous detail in the discussion of any of the subjects considered, an attempt has been made to make the archæological and anthropological evidence intelligible to those who are not experts in these departments. The use of lantern slides at the lectures helped tremendously to this end, but if this aid to clarity is not available for the reader in their present form, serious students will find illustrations and detailed information of most of the data in the larger works to which reference is made in the footnotes.

For those who are anxious to pursue the subject further in a less specialized degree, a short list of books, mostly of a comprehensive character, is added covering more or less the ground of the lectures. These volumes, of course, are only a selection of recent works accessible in any good library.

My chief aim has been to supply a background for Old Testament studies constructed mainly from my own independent researches as an anthropologist, and to provide from accepted sources an account of the origin of the Hebrew tribes and their consolidation as a theocratic nation in its historical setting in the Ancient East. The real contribution of Israel to the world, however, has been in the sphere of religion, and it is this unique achievement that is revealed by a comparative study of the material. It is my hope, therefore, that this survey of the civilization and literature of the Hebrews may make clear the stages by which a "peculiar people" were led under the inspiration of God to discern between permanent and temporary values till at length the development reached its culmination in Christianity. My friend Mr. H. Coote Lake, Hon. Secretary of the Folk-Lore Society, and my ever-devoted wife, have very kindly read the proofs and made useful suggestions at a time when I was much occupied with academic duties at the beginning of the October Term, and therefore liable to pass slips unnoticed.

E. O. JAMES.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTORY. THE SOURCES OF HEBREW TRADITION

The literature known to us as the Old Testament, being the product of an ancient culture, and written up to a thousand years after the events described took place, can only be correctly estimated when it is placed in its proper historical setting. To this end, therefore, it is necessary for the student of these sacred Scriptures to have some knowledge of the world in which the Hebrews arose, and of the historical situation which constitutes the background of the checkered career of Israel. In the light of modern research these ancient records have acquired a new importance and significance for the student alike of religion and of human culture, while in the process of re-interpretation the narratives have gained far more than they have lost in their spiritual value. The new outlook, however, involves a fundamental change in attitude towards the documents and their contents. The truth is, as Dr. James Orr pointed out nearly thirty years ago, that "no one who studies the Old Testament in the light of modern knowledge can help being, to some extent, a 'Higher Critic.'" [1]

It is unfortunate that the term "criticism" has come to mean for many people a destructive instead of a constructive and "discerning" treatment of the

[1] *The Problem of the Old Testament* (London, 1905), p. 9.

sacred narratives. In consequence the critical study of the Bible has been regarded with not a little mistrust and suspicion by many who are perfectly ready to admit the validity of the method in the study of the great masters in literature and art, on the ground that it does violence to the inspired record. This misconception arises mainly from the notion of the Scriptures having been *dictated* by God ; so that to apply anything in the nature of a discriminating investigation to the understanding of the narratives is presumptuous, if not impious. But it is aggravated by the confusion of " criticism " with " censure," and a failure to recognize the positive character of the best critical scholarship to-day.

Once, however, these preliminary difficulties have been overcome, the value and importance of the method is apparent since an analysis of the books into their various documents explains such obvious discrepancies as the duration of the Deluge in Gen. vii. 12, 17 ; and vii. 24, viii. 3. As long ago as 1683 Vitringa recognized a dual account in the opening chapters of Genesis, and it was a group of Sunday School teachers who in the ordinary course of the preparation of a lesson on the story of Joseph became aware of the presence of two narratives giving slightly different interpretations of the sale of the lad to the Midianites or Ishmaelites, and the parts played by Reuben and Judah in the transaction (Gen. xxxvii. 28, 36 ; cf. xxxix. 1).[1] This shows that expert training in critical methods is not required to detect the composite character of the literature, as any one

[1] Cf. T. H. Robinson, *The People and the Book* (Oxford, 1925), pp. 153 f.

may test for himself by comparing, let us say, the book of Chronicles with the earlier narratives in Kings and Samuel, or, as we shall see in a later lecture, the two accounts of the settlement of Israel in Palestine by a process of gradual penetration of the country on the one hand, or of the extermination of the indigenous population, on the other.

It is now a matter of common knowledge that in the Hexateuch are combined four documents, known respectively as the *Jahwist* (symbolized by the letter J), a product of the southern kingdom of Judah in the ninth and eighth centuries B.C., and distinguished by the use of Yahweh (*i.e.* LORD in the A.V.) as the name of the God of Israel; the *Elohist* (E), from the northern kingdom in which the general term *Elohim* (God) is employed prior to the revelation of the divine name to Moses at the burning bush; *Deuteronomy* (D) (or at any rate chapters i–xli of this book), apparently closely connected with the Josiah reformation,[1] just as the *Priestly Code* (P) was intimately associated with the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah. It was under this priestly influence, inspired by Ezekiel and carried into effect after the Exile in the sixth and fifth centuries, that the ancient laws and rites were codified, though some scholars now think that Ezra based his constructive work in the new community on Deuteronomy rather than on P.

Passing to the so-called *historical books* which follow the Hexateuch, we are again confronted with several

[1] This document, which includes passages in Judges and the Hexateuch, is now placed by some critics after the Exile, while Dr. Welch has suggested that it belongs to the early monarchy, or even to the time of the Judges.

parallel accounts edited by the J and E schools, and combined by a redactor whose aim has been to represent Israel as a Theocracy in terms of the later prophetic and priestly conceptions. To this end the historical element preserved in the oral traditions, early records and official documents, is frequently stressed in one direction or another to bring out certain theological ideas, and themes are often developed into stories, or *Midrashim*, for the purposes of religious instruction, in accordance with the thought and practice of later times. Thus David, Solomon, Hezekiah, and Josiah, being great religious heroes, are given greater prominence than important kings like Omri or Jeroboam II, while the book of Chronicles (written between 300 and 200 B.C.) conceals questionable actions recorded in the earlier narratives (Samuel and Kings) in presenting an idealized picture of the founder of the dynasty of Judah. Genuine history, however, is often enclosed in a picturesque framework, as, for example, in the accounts of the return from the Exile given in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. But the very considerable lapse of time, amounting to centuries, separating the events recorded from their occurrences has to be taken into account in arriving at historical conclusions from this evidence.

Imbedded in the main documents of the Old Testament are fragments of very ancient material like the Song of Deborah (Judges v.), the Law of Holiness (Lev. xvii.–xxvi.), the Book of the Covenant (Exod. xx. 22–xxiii. 33 ; cf. xxiv. 7), but it is not until the *prophetic books* are reached that we come upon the actual words of a living writer. Even this literature contains later extraneous elements, but nevertheless

from the days of Amos (760) onwards we enter the sphere of contemporary records.

It is not, however, from literary sources alone that our information concerning the history and religion of Israel is derived. The enormous progress made in recent years in archæological research, especially in Palestine and the sites of the Ancient East, is throwing a flood of light directly and indirectly on the Old Testament. This evidence comes to us at first hand from the spade of the excavator, and not infrequently in the form of inscriptions and texts straight from the chisel of the stone-cutter, and therefore free from the copyist and redactorist errors of literary sources. Thus, our knowledge of the great civilizations of the Nile and the Euphrates valleys is very considerable, and actually, as Dr. S. A. Cook has shown, we know more about what the indigenous culture of Palestine had to offer to Israel than of what the invading Hebrews brought with them into their Promised Land from the desert.[1]

Moreover, in addition to the material gathered from ancient sites like Gezer, Taanach, Megiddo, Byblos, and Bethshan, valuable new material is now coming to light from Ras Shamra at Cape Fennel, on the northern extremity of the Syrian Coast, situated in the ancient land of Amurru, which was closely linked with Palestine in early times. As only a small section of these texts, which are now being edited by M. Virolleaud, has been published, it is premature to pass an opinion on the precise bearing of the data on the Old Testament, but since close relations are known

[1] *Religion of Ancient Palestine in the Light of Archæology* (Camb., 1930).

to have been maintained between Palestine, Syria, and the surrounding cultures during the Amarna period (*c.* 1400 B.C.), additional evidence from this district throws up the background in stronger relief.

But important as are the discoveries in the lands with which Israel was in contact, of greater significance for Biblical students is the work of Professor Garstang at Jericho and the adjacent sites, of Mr. Crowfoot at Samaria, of Mr. Starkey at Tell Duweir (the Biblical Lachish), since these have produced, or are producing, material that bears directly on the Hebrew conquest and occupation of Palestine. By long and persistent research, and a cautious and critical use of the accumulating evidence, literary and archæological, it is now possible, as I shall endeavour to show in these lectures, to reconstruct the past history of Israel with some approximation to accuracy. But when we move into the dim and distant realm of origins, the data fail us, and we are compelled to grope our way as best we can among the nebulous inhabitants of the Syro-Arabian desert and the dwellers in Mesopotamia in search of the ancestors of the Hebrew people.

Nevertheless, despite the difficulties of the task, any serious attempt to construct a historical background of the Old Testament cannot ignore the problem of the origins of Israel, especially as the Biblical writers have provided fuller information about the beginnings of the nation than have the chroniclers of almost any other people. Unfortunately, however, their accounts are largely in the form of folklore and legend from which it is by no means always easy to extract a historical kernel, and when the narratives refer to actual happenings they are often confused by

having been written by men who have adopted the social conditions and religious beliefs of a much later period, far removed in thought and practice from the times they describe. Therefore, to place these traditions in their proper historical setting it is necessary to construct a background from the contemporary sources, however meagre may be the data concerning the earlier periods.

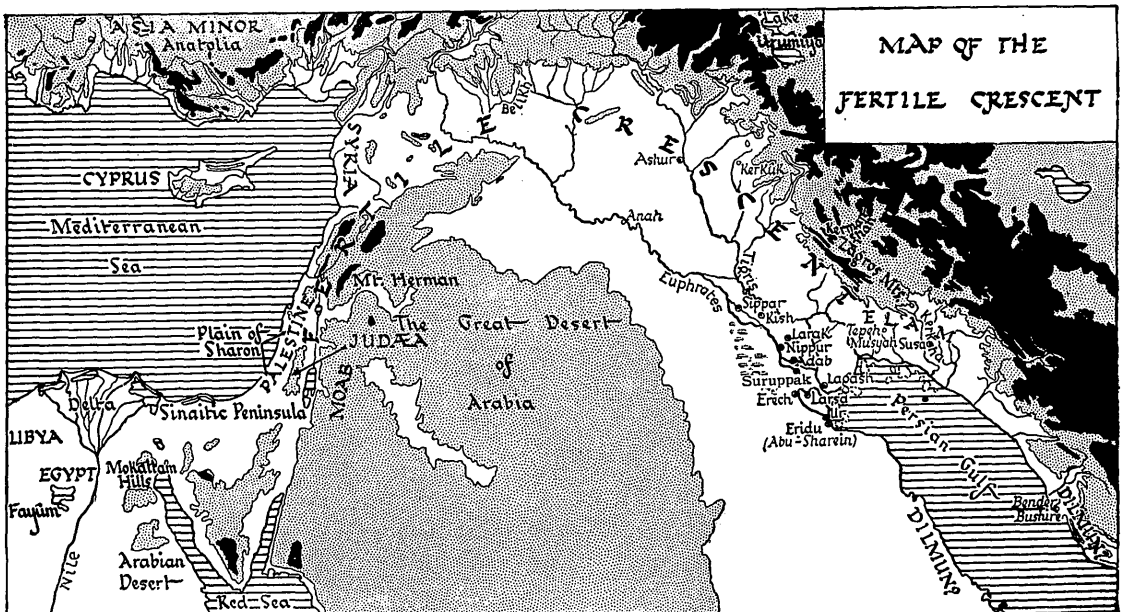
It is a matter of common knowledge, not to say sometimes of ridicule, that the figures 4004 B.C. occur in the margin of a Reference Bible against the opening sentence of the book of Genesis. This chronological estimate of the creation of the universe is attributed to Archbishop Ussher, but it is based on biblical calculations, and it would have been endorsed by the writers of the Old Testament. Now in approaching a question of this kind it is important to remember that we are dealing with ancient history rather than with modern astronomy and anthropology. The compilers of the biblical narratives knew nothing about galactic universes, geological ages, and palæolithic cultures. Their horizon was limited to the Ancient East, and, so far as their vision went, they recorded faithfully the ideas current in their day and generation. To attribute to them knowledge and information they did not and could not possess is to do them an injustice, and confuse the issue.

Regarded from their standpoint, 4004 B.C. is a perfectly good date for the beinning of Hebrew history, and it has scientific value inasmuch as it represents in round numbers the period in which the ancestors of Israel first made their appearance in that part of the world which Breasted has aptly described as the

Fertile Crescent (Plate I). This region constitutes the geographical background of the Old Testament, and it was the only area of the earth's surface that had any practical consideration for the writers of the biblical narratives. It was somewhere on the northern fringe of the Arabian desert in a belt between the Mediterranean, the mountains of Eastern Asia Minor and the Zagros range, separating Mesopotamia from the Persian plateau, that the human race was thought to have made its first appearance, as an agricultural people happily placed in a well-stocked garden. There is no indication in this literature of any knowledge of a time when early man lived the precarious life of a hunter and collector of the means of subsistence, and struggled with an adverse arctic climate under glacial conditions in the Pleistocene period of geology, and the Palæolithic age of archæology.

Hebrew tradition starts with the phase of culture that marks the transition from the so-called Neolithic to that of the Bronze Age in the fourth and third millennia B.C. at the dawn of civilization, when the newly discovered art of domesticating animals had led to the establishment of a pastoral nomadic culture on the Eurasian grasslands, and that of agriculture had laid the foundations of settled communities in the fertile valleys of the Nile and the Euphrates.

Now we know that at an early period agricultural communities grew up in Western Asia at Susa, an ancient capital of Persia at the foot of the Zagros mountains, where the earliest settlement, 60 metres below the present surface level, takes us back to about 5000 B.C. It is thought that these people were acquainted with agriculture since corn-grinding stones



Reproduced from "Peasants and Potters" by H. J. E. Peake and H. J. Fleure, by kind permission of the Oxford University Press.

PLATE I

Facing p. 8

have been found in the mound that appears to belong to the lowest stratum. There is no indication, however, of their having domesticated any animal except the dog and possibly the horse. Their pottery, on the other hand, appears to have been made on a leathern model, and as basketry was in all probability the earliest matrix, these vessels do not represent the original stage in the art.[1] Consequently, a more ancient culture behind that of Susa I must be presupposed somewhere in this area though the sites have yet to be discovered.

The evidence is sufficient, however, to show that a vigorous settlement existed on the western slope of the Persian plateau, apparently before the great civilizations of Egypt and Babylonia arose in the fourth millennium. In fact, long before 4000 B.C., a vast proto-historic culture spread from Central Asia to the plateau of Iran, and thence to Syria and Egypt. This was succeeded by a people who wore pigtails, and constructed polychrome pottery. Possibly this second migration, which later was known as Elamite, came from North Syria, and although the linguistic term Semite has little meaning at this early period, it was apparently these people who laid the foundations of civilization in Northern Mesopotamia at Kish.

At the dawn of the historic period the waters of the Persian Gulf reached nearly as far north as Hit, 180 miles inland from their present limit (Plate II), so that Lower Mesopotamia, which includes both Sumer and

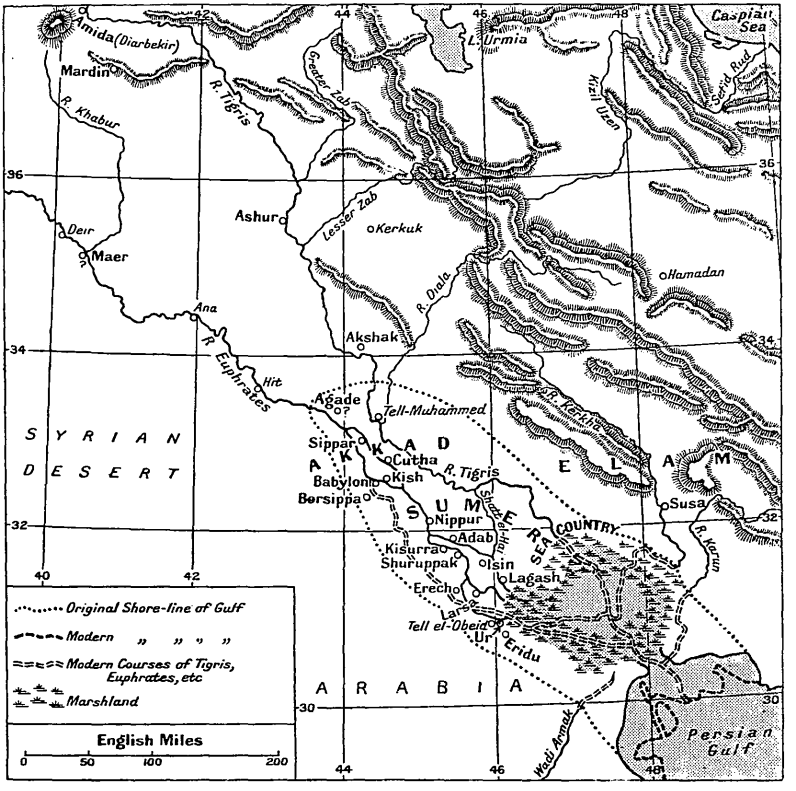
[1] H. Frankfort, *Royal Anthropological Institute Occasional Papers*, No. 6, 1924, pp. 78 ff.; cf. De Morgan, *Délégation en Perse : Mémoires* xiii.; R. Pumpelly, *Explorations in Turkestan* (Washington, 1908).

Akkad, is a delta, but as the silting process developed the streams converged and then divided into several channels. In this way the great alluvial plain of Mesopotamia was formed, extending over a hundred miles in width, consistently flat and swampy, with grassland or desert at its upper end.

This fen-like combination of mud, clay and sand, parched in summer and water-logged in winter, could be made exceedingly fertile by drainage and irrigation, and so develop into a veritable paradise in the midst of a wilderness. In the south the date palm was native to the soil, and since its fruit provided a complete diet for man and beast it fulfilled the requirements of " a tree of life in the midst of the garden." Whether the vine was similarly " a tree of knowledge " it is difficult to say, but, if a historical site for Eden is to be found anywhere, the delta land of Sumer and Akkad has a strong claim once it was " planted." [1] Here, as in the Genesis story, crops required little or no labour on the part of man, for when " the waters under the heaven ' were ' gathered together into one place " and the dry land appeared, " the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind : and God saw that it was good." Thus, the description in Genesis of the original home of mankind corresponds almost exactly with the conditions known to have prevailed in the Mesopotamian delta at the dawn of civilization, including even the Flood and the Tower of Babel, and there cannot be

[1] Yahuda, on the other hand, argues in favour of an Egyptian background for the Paradise story. Cf. *The Language of the Pentateuch in its Relation to Egyptian* (Oxford, 1933), pp. 156 ff.

PLATE II



MAP OF SUMER AND AKKAD.

Reproduced by permission from "The Universal History of the World," Amalgamated Press, Ltd.

Facing p. 10

much room for doubt that in this district the historical background of the ancient traditions must be sought.

Such a delectable land was scarcely likely to remain long without inhabitants. The ancestors of the Semitic-speaking people of the northern part of the Syrian desert and the Upper Euphrates valley, later known as the Amurru, appear to have been the first to colonize the delta in the district that eventually became the land of Akkad. Their occupation of this area prevented the proto-Elamites in the Zagros mountains and on the plains of the Tigris from advancing southwards into the new delta. This confined them to what was afterwards Assyria. The nomadic tribes on the central Arabian plateau, however, drifted into the marshes, and adopted a settled agricultural life on this fertile soil, thereby bringing a "proto-Semitic" element into Sumer, quite distinct from the similar migration into Akkad, with very little in common except a linguistic affinity. The northern Semites, if this term may be used ethnologically at this early period, were more organized than their southern neighbours, and better equipped for the adoption of city life.

Finally, a dark-haired people of Indo-European stock with long narrow heads, speaking an agglutinative language resembling ancient Turkish (Turanian) in its formation but not in its etymology, took up their abode in Mesopotamia as the Sumerians. That they came from a mountainous district is suggested by the representations of their gods standing on hills, while the fact that they built their houses of timber shows their original home to have been in a wooded region indicative of the heavily timbered uplands. But in

physical type the Sumerians are quite distinct from the inhabitants of the Elamite mountains, while their legends imply that they entered the country by sea. Moreover, this accords with their geographical situation in the south of Mesopotamia. From the widespread character of this civilization, which extends eastwards to the Indus valley, it would seem not improbable that the cradleland is somewhere in the highlands between these two centres whence the Sumerians made their way to the shores of the Persian Gulf after the earlier population was established in Akkad.

According to Dr. Woolley, "one must picture the opening stage as one in which isolated settlers ventured into the drying marsh, put up their reed huts on natural islands or raised them on just such platforms of reed and mud as are described in the Babylonian Epic of Creation, according to which Marduk kneaded clay and spread it over a mat made of rushes which he laid on the face of the waters, and began to cultivate their little patches of ground, trenching it for drainage or digging channels for its more regular irrigation. On the wider stretches of land, and especially along the river's banks where the soil was richest, villages would grow up, and with their growth would come in corporate effort leading to the construction of more important canals and to something like the scientific control of the river. With the advent of the Sumerians, who seem to have been pre-eminently town-dwellers, a further development took place." [1]

It is to this migration that reference is made in Genesis in an ancient narrative incorporating some

[1] C. L. Woolley, *The Sumerians* (Oxford, 1929), p. 16.

Babylonian tradition concerning the original area of dispersal of mankind—"And the people journeyed from the east and they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there" (xi. 2). The ancestors of Israel, however, were not Sumerians. According to the biblical genealogical table the earth was peopled after the Flood by the descendants of the three sons of Noah. Shem was the ancestor of Eber (*'ebher*)—*i.e.* of the Hebrews (*'ibhrim*)—who is the father of Peleg (division) and of Joktan, whose sons represent various Arabian tribes. Ham gave rise to the nations in the South—Egypt, Cush (Ethiopia, or Nubia), and the countries bordering on the African or Arabian coasts of the Red Sea, together with the Canaanites and Phœnicians. The Japheth races are all in the north, mostly north or west of Palestine, and extending to Phrygia, Armenia, Greece and the Ægean islands.

The grouping, however, in this table is purely arbitrary, having political and geographical rather than ethnological and linguistic significance. The classification seems to have been determined largely by the proximity of the nations and by their relationships at the time when the narratives were drawn up. Thus, Elam and Lud are represented as sons of Shem because the Elamites and Lydians were united under Assyrian rule at the time. Most of the nations are situated in the Fertile Crescent, and taken as a historico-geographical record of the political situation in this region in ancient times, the table is not without its value. But as an ethnological statement it fails completely inasmuch as it groups together people of entirely different race and speech. The

Phœnicians, for example, are linguistically allied to the Hebrews, but on the Genesis classification they are related to Ham and not to Shem, while the Canaanites are brought into connexion with the Egyptians, the Hittites, and the Amorites. Neither the Elamites nor the Lydians are Semitic in speech or type, and therefore should not be " Shemites " by descent, just as it is an anachronism to make Nimrod, the son of Cush (an Ethiopian), the founder of Babylonia and Assyria.

We now know that the linguistic term Semite can only be used with propriety of Arabian, Hebrew Syrian or Aramæan, and ancient Assyrian. Of these languages Arabic is the only form that is still spoken (though Hebrew has been revived), and it is of comparatively recent introduction. We know nothing of the speech of the primitive Arabians, and we are equally vague concerning the original centre of the group. Semitic-speaking people extended from Morocco to the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, and however misleading language may be as a guide to race, in this case we are dealing with a long-headed, olive-skinned type of brunettes having wavy hair, small tuft-like beards on the pointed chins of the males, ill-filled skulls and aquiline noses, familiar in such modern peoples as the Arabs and the Jews.

The Hebrews represent a section of this homogeneous group of nomadic shepherds who in ancient times inhabited the grasslands of Arabia like the Bedouins of more recent ages. In the third millennium B.C. isolated units of these roving pastoral tribes from Arabia and the Southern Syrian desert settled in the Mesopotamian delta where they adopted the life

of the peasant cultures, while a northern section took possession of the upper reaches of the Euphrates. In the North these Semitic immigrants predominated, but in the South the Sumerians retained the ascendancy till later the two elements merged, or were replaced by the more warlike and virile Semites.

The opening narratives of the Old Testament reveal the age-long struggle between the mountain peoples of the North, and the desert-wanderers of the grass-lands—a struggle that is still going on—for the possession of the Fertile Crescent.[1] The picture is graphically drawn in the patriarchal portions of the book of Genesis, which will form the basis of the discussion in the next lecture. Suffice it to say at this point that the ancestors of Israel were originally a Semitic people speaking in all probability a western Amorite dialect, and living in the desert, possibly in the neighbourhood of the Wadi Armah, about one hundred and eighty miles south-west of Basra, on a trade route leading from the Persian Gulf to the coast of the Red Sea.

The area between the Nile on the one side and the Tigris and the Euphrates on the other was traversed by trade routes in the Bronze Age, and there is nothing improbable in the biblical tradition concerning the settlement of the family of Terah at Ur of the Chaldees on the Arabian side of the Euphrates in the third millennium B.C. It was about this time (*c.* 2300 B.C.) that the second or "Canaanite" Semitic invasion established itself and refounded the ancient city of "Ur of the Chaldees," eventually making Southern Babylonia into a Chaldean kingdom. That a group of

[1] Cf. Breasted, *Conquest of Civilization* (London, 1926), p. 118.

Semites should set up a caravanserai and bazaar at the end of the trade route is what would be expected, and having established themselves they would inevitably come under Babylonian influence. If this represents the historical situation behind the biblical tradition, it accounts for the Babylonian contacts revealed in the Hebrew creation stories, and the legend of the Flood and the Tower of Babel. The background of the opening narratives of the Old Testament has every appearance of being Sumerian, reflecting the agricultural civilization of the fertile river valley rather than the pastoral nomadic life of the desert and the grasslands.

Chapter II

THE HEBREWS BEFORE THE CONQUEST OF PALESTINE

When we pass from the legendary history of the Hebrews in "the brave days of old" to the more sober patriarchal narratives, we are confronted with two traditions concerning the original home of the culture. On the one hand the connexions are with the great ancient centres of civilization in Babylonia and North Syria—Ur of the Chaldees and Haran—and on the other with the simpler pastoral society of the desert. Thus, if Abraham was a dweller in Mesopotamia, when his seed in later years paid their annual tithe they were instructed to repeat a summary of their national history which opened with the words, "My father was a wandering Aramæan" (Deut. xxvi. 5)—a formula which doubtless is of much greater antiquity than the seventh century document in which it occurs, and goes back in all probability to the nomadic history of the nation.

The northern Semitic region known as Aram extended from the western borders of Babylonia to the highlands of Western Asia, and supported a roving population of shepherds living very much as does a modern Bedouin. While the soil was quite unsuited to the requirements of an agricultural community, it provided pasture for the small cattle of a migratory farm, and as the Jacob narrative shows, it was possible

to become prosperous under these conditions. Nevertheless, there was a tendency for the Aramæan nomad to adopt the settled life of a peasant if and when opportunity occurred, though Israel never ceased to regard the shepherd culture as the ideal, even as late as the days of Amos and the Rechabites (Amos v. 25; 2 Kings x. 15 f.; Jer. xxxv.).

The Semites were essentially a nomadic pastoral people, and they did not readily adapt themselves to the settled life of the city. The Northern section, however, from the Syrian desert and the Upper Euphrates valley who colonized Akkad (afterwards known as Assyria) were better organized and more accustomed to town ways than the scattered and isolated Arabian tribes in Sumer. But while they were able to hold their own for a prolonged period, and under the influence of their powerful chief Sargon to become the rulers of the plain of Shinar, these conquests obliged them to settle down to the routine of city life in fixed abodes made of sun-dried bricks, and to learn from the Sumerians the art of civic administration, together with that of writing and sculpture, and the use of the calendar.

Unfortunately, however, all this had an enfeebling effect on the sturdy nomads, with the result that the ancient city of Ur was able to lead a successful Sumerian revolt about 2400 B.C. For a brief period (*c.* 2400–2328) a third dynasty revived Sumerian power and jurisdiction, but the last king, Ibin Sin, fell before the combined attacks of the Elamites and the Amorites (*i.e.* the inhabitants of the land of Amurru in the northern desert). Thus rule again passed into Semitic hands, and the establishment

of the Babylonian Empire by Hammurabi, about 2050 B.C., constitutes the end of Sumerian predominance in Mesopotamia.

In all probability it was in connexion with these events that the story of Abraham arose, and finally (some 1300 years later) assumed the form it takes in the book of Genesis. But if the narratives are not comparable to the records of the journeyings of St. Paul, for example, it does not follow that they are wholly imaginary in character. Attempts have been made to dismiss the patriarch as a historical figure by making him a personification of the nation, the creation of the poetic fancy of the author of the narrative, or even a Canaanite deity worshipped at Shechem and Hebron. But such explanations do not derive any support from the internal evidence inasmuch as the record is that of a very human individual subject to the failings common among men but unusual in culture heroes and gods (Gen. xii. 13; xvi. 6; xvii. 17; xx. 2). In these sober accounts there is nothing comparable to the miraculous exploits of the mythical figures of the ancient sagas. All the experiences are perfectly ordinary and natural, and such as would befall a leader of a pastoral tribe temporarily settled in an agricultural community.

The tradition relates how Abraham dwelt with his father Terah at Ur of the Chaldees, and for some unexplained reason he and his family were compelled to migrate to Haran, in the north of the Fertile Crescent (Gen. xi. 21–30; xii. 1–3; xi. 31 (P)), whence they were led by divine command to proceed in a westerly direction till at length they reached Palestine. Terah died in Haran, and Abraham

alone remained as the leader of the clan, in company with Lot, his nephew, who is represented as the ancestor of the kindred tribes of Moab and Ammon.

That there is a historical background to these traditional migrations seems very probable in view of the movements of peoples between Mesopotamia and Palestine known to have occurred at the time in question. If there is any truth in the conjecture that the family of Terah had joined forces with Ibin Sin against Hammurabi, there is every reason for their beating a hasty retreat after the defeat and death of their leader and the destruction of the city. The caravan route connecting Ur with Haran along the margin of the desert would afford the quickest way of escape, but as the influence of Hammurabi gained ground in Mesopotamia they would be driven for safety into the desert. Having turned their faces westwards they would tend to look in the direction of Transjordania for their oasis.[1] Would-be settlers from the adjoining territories were constantly descending upon Palestine very much as Abraham is represented as pitching his tent at Hebron, Isaac at Gerar, and Jacob at Shechem. The patriarch's subsequent migration into Egypt would follow if it be supposed that the failure of the winter's rain had

[1] The conflict between Abraham and the four kings recorded in Gen. xiv. introduces names which have given rise to much speculation. Amraphel has been equated with Hammurabi and Arioch with Eri-aku, the Sumerian form of Arad-Sin, king of Larsa. But the identifications rest on such very hypothetical evidence that no convincing conclusions can be drawn from it. Thus, Tidal might as reasonably refer to Tud'alia, a Hittite king who lived about 1350 B.C.

caused a temporary famine in Palestine, which was not irrigated like the Nile valley.

This reconstruction of the traditional history of Abraham, however, is based on the supposition that Ur of the Chaldees is to be identified with the ancient city on the Persian Gulf. An alternative interpretation of "Ur Kasdim" in Gen. xi. 28, is that of a city or district in Upper Mesopotamia whither he sent his son to seek a wife "in his own country" (*i.e.* Aram Naharaim, or the city of Nahor (cf. xxiv. 4, 10)). It was to Laban, son of Nahor in Haran in Upper Mesopotamia, that Jacob fled from the wrath of his brother and eventually married within the kin according to the endogamous tendency of pastoral people.

Whatever may be the correct interpretation of Ur Kasdim, there can be no doubt that the racial affinities of the Hebrews were essentially with the desert. If Abraham dwelt for awhile in the Euphrates valley, his natural home was on Aramæan soil, and it was to keep the stock pure that it behoved the clan to contract alliances with their own kith and kin and refrain from unions with peasant women. Jacob the nomad, therefore, is contrasted favourably with Esau the hunter, who sold his birthright and married "the daughters of Canaan."

At this point the narratives become tribal rather than individual in character, and the traditions concerning the twelve sons of Israel can hardly be other than ethnological in origin and intention. Two divisions are clearly indicated, marked off by descent from the two wives of the eponymous ancestor—Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zabulon, belonging

to the Leah line, and Joseph and Benjamin to that of Rachel. The inferiority of Gad and Asher, and of Dan and Naphtali, is explained by descent from concubines. But all were of Aramæan extraction, and children of one father.

It has been suggested that the names of the tribes have a totemic significance, Leah meaning "wild cow" or "antelope," and Rachel signifying "ewe," but it has yet to be proved that totemism was practised among the Hebrews at any stage of their development. As Nöldeke has shown, the fact that many Canaanite cities had animal and plant names is not of itself proof of a totemic organization, as these places may have adopted the names of clans already settled there,[1] and in the absence of any specific characteristics of the institution among the Semites the hypothesis is very uncertain. It is more probable that these designations are to be explained as the survival of ancient clan names, and if they ever had a totemic significance totemism had ceased to operate before the Hebrews settled in Palestine.

It seems that in the Jacob narratives we are dealing with two distinct traditions of migration: the one of the influx of Aramæans at a very early period, and the other of the Israelite invasion under Joshua. These appear to have become fused in later times and to have assumed the form of stories to account for the relative positions of the existing tribes.[2] The supremacy of Israel over Edom is explained in terms of the two brothers struggling for the mastery, and that of Judah over the Northern Kingdom by the story of

[1] *Oesterreichische Monatschrift für den Orient*, 1884, p. 300.

[2] Cf. S. A. Cook, *Cambridge Ancient History*, III, pp. 359 ff.

Joseph's exaltation over his brethren. It follows from this that the narratives were not drawn up when the Northern and Southern provinces were at enmity, otherwise they would hardly have been represented as derived from a common ancestor.[1]

It may be that the Genesis traditions reflect the conditions which prevailed in Palestine—especially in the South (Beersheba, Beer-lahai-roi, and Hebron) and the East (Gilead, Moab, Ishmael, and Ammon)—when Egyptian rule was only nominal from the fifteenth to the fourteenth centuries B.C. The native princes reigned in Palestine as vassals of their Egyptian overlords, but being engaged in constant strife and intrigue their positions were none too secure. Consequently they would not be inclined to look with favour on the encroachments of the Hebrews. Complaints may have been made to Pharaoh, and if the narratives have a tribal significance, they suggest that internal strife prevailed among the Israelite clans. Joseph was forced into Egypt and prospered. Later the rest were compelled to follow suit through pressure of famine. This event is recorded in the form of a story comparable to the Egyptian tale of the Two Brothers, but if behind it there is a historical situation, an important question of chronology is raised.

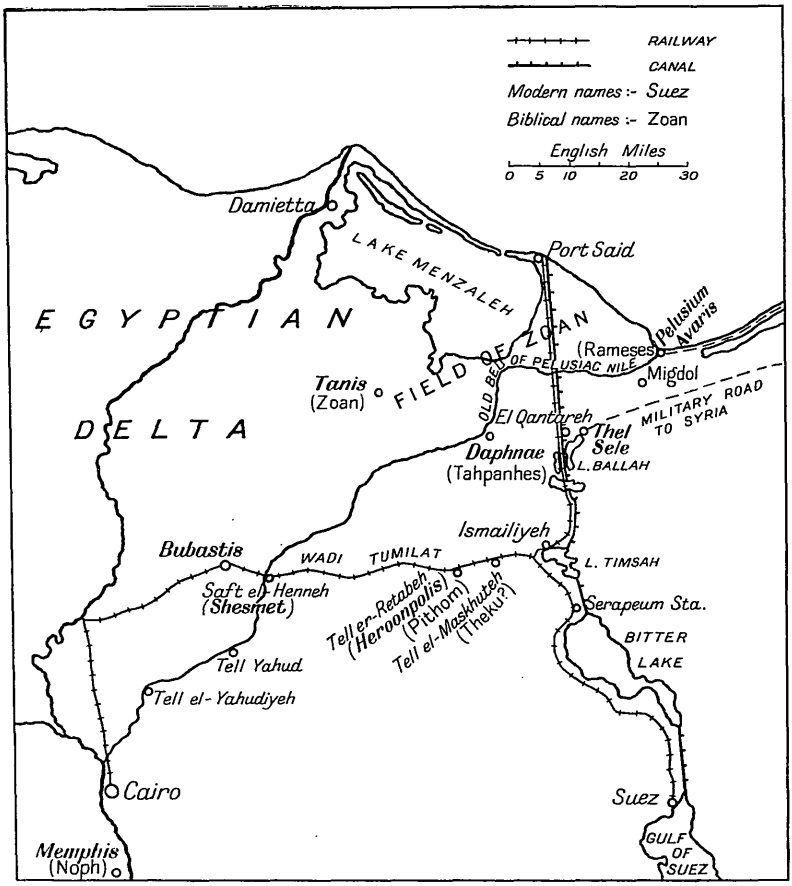
It is unthinkable that a Hebrew tribe or family should rise to a position of supreme importance in the Nile valley, as the narrative states, at any period other than that of the Hyksos, when the line of the Semitic Shepherd Kings had gained the dominion in Egypt. At this time there is no reason why a company of

[1] In 2 Sam. xix. 43, Israel is the firstborn, not Judah, and in 1 Chron. v. 1 ff. Joseph obtains the birthright.

Aramæans should not have been allowed to settle on the borders of Egypt between the Delta and the Arabian desert in the neighbourhood of the Wady Tumilat, which is apparently the Biblical "land of Goshen" (Plate III). There they would be able to continue their pastoral habits, and in due course would doubtless tend to ally themselves with other Syrian tribes in the district. A century ago the Wady Tumilat contained about four thousand nomads, though under modern conditions it supports treble this number of peasants. It may be conjectured, therefore, that Israel in Egypt could not have been more than four thousand strong,[1] but with the fall of the Hyksos dynasty the Syrian and Aramæan tribes consolidated. Consequently collectively they might appear to the indigenous population to be more and mightier than themselves (Exod. i. 9). The combination of fear of a numerical strong Semitic population within and around their borders, and hatred of the Hyksos yoke they had just thrown off, would make "the oppression" almost an inevitable consequence of the prevailing circumstances.

In point of fact there is evidence that foreign slaves were prevalent at this time in Egypt, and in the XIIth Dynasty the term "Syrian" was a synonym for slave. It would seem very probable, therefore, that Ahmose I (*c.* 1580–1558 B.C.)—the founder of the dynasty which expelled the Hyksos—was the "new king who knew not Joseph" (Exod. i. 8), and that it was under him and his successors that the Hebrews were driven to work in the brickfields and

[1] This accords with the record (Exod. i. 15) that two midwives sufficed for the Hebrews.



THE EGYPTIAN DELTA.

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quarries under Egyptian taskmasters (Exod. i. 11). The traditional view that Rameses II (1301–1234) was the villain of the piece rests on evidence which is far from convincing, and raises more problems than it solves. The name Rameses as that of one of the store-cities alleged to have been built by the Hebrews proves nothing since it may have been introduced by the compiler of the narrative in the eighth century B.C., very much as a chronicler might refer to York as having been built by the Romans despite the fact that the town they erected was Eboracum.

Petrie's claim to have discovered the city in the modern village of Tell er-Retabeh in the Wady Tumilat rests on a scene in relief on a temple wall depicting Rameses II killing prisoners before the god Atum, Lord of Thebes, and on a granite stela in this temple recording defeats inflicted on Bedouin. It was here too that an inscription was found referring to an "overseer of granaries." [1] There is nothing, however, to prove that the city of Rameses was in the Wady Tumilat at all, or that the Tell er-Retabeh was ever called Rameses, or that the site is that of a store-city of this Pharaoh. It is much more likely, as Alan Gardiner has shown, that it represents Pi-Ramesse, the Delta capital of the XIXth Dynasty, at or near the later Pelusium (muddy city) on the eastern branch of the Nile.[2]

Similarly, the identification of Pithom with a

[1] Petrie, *Hyksos and Israelite Cities* (London, 1906), pls. xxviii.–xxxvi., pp. 28 ff.; cf. Mallon, *Les Hebreux en Egypte* (*Orientalia*, num. 3), Rome, Inst. bibl. pontif., 1921.

[2] *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, 1918, V, pp. 127 ff., 179 ff., 260 ff., 268 f.

modern village called Tell el-Maskuta (Mound of the Image) in the Wady Tumilat, suggested by Naville in 1883,[1] is by no means satisfactory. The name occurs only on two hieroglyphic inscriptions, whereas at Tell er-Retabeh, eight and a half miles farther west (*i.e.* at the site equated by Petrie with Rameses), there is a temple, or "Pithom," dedicated to Atum, and as such it would be called "Pi-Tum" (the house of Tum). Nevertheless, the fact that two Latin inscriptions found at Tell el-Maskuta mention Ero or Hero, suggests that in classical times the place was called Heronpolis, the Roman counterpart of the Greek name Pithom.[2]

But granting that Pithom is to be identified with a city in the Wady Tumilat built by Semitic slaves, the date of the oppression is not thereby determined, for there is no proof that Rameses II founded either of the towns mentioned in Exod. i. 11. The earlier reign of Thutmose III (1501–1447) was a time of great expansion and activity in Egypt, and in a tomb painting of Rekhmara, vizier of Pharaoh (Thutmose III), at Abd-el-Kurnah, opposite Luxor, brick-making by gangs of slaves under Egyptian taskmasters is depicted.[3]

During this reign, which lasted for over fifty years,

[1] *The Store City of Pithom and the Route of the Exodus* (London, 1883).

[2] Cf. Petrie, *op cit.*, p. 28.

[3] Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1894), pp. 417 f., 128. Various suggestions have been made concerning the reference to the withholding of straw from the Hebrew brickmakers. This, however, can hardly be other than local colour added by a later scribe who was ignorant of the fact that Nile mud coheres so readily that no binding material is required.

the great hall of Karnak at Thebes was restored. This represents the largest building of the Egyptian Empire, and occupies a floor space about the size of that of Notre Dame in Paris. It contained no less than 136 columns in 16 rows. The obelisk known as Cleopatra's needle, which now adorns our Thames Embankment in London, was erected by Thutmose III at Heliopolis, in commemoration of his fourth jubilee, as was its companion which stands in the Central Park, New York. A fragment of a third monolith, originally erected at Der-el-Bahari in celebration of his passage across the Euphrates, may be seen in Constantinople, while at Koptos he entirely rebuilt the temple of Min. In addition to these architectural enterprises, like Alexander the Great, he carried on aggressive wars of conquest to extend the kingdom, and launched his armies with conspicuous success on Palestine and Syria, penetrating even to the Euphrates valley and the islands of the Ægean.

That the man who crushed the cities and kingdoms of Western Asia should oppress Semitic slaves within his domain is hardly surprising, and it may well be that the long-suffering Hebrews in the Wady Tumilat, whose cry had been going up to heaven by reason of their bondage since the expulsion of the Hyksos by Ahmose I in 1580, reached the limits of its endurance in the days of the ruthless Thutmose III (1501–1447).

If the Egyptian Napoleon was the Oppressor, his son and successor, Amenhotep II (1447–1420), was the Pharaoh of the Exodus. The death of the tyrant doubtless was regarded by the Hebrews as a heaven-sent moment to throw off the yoke that had grown heavier than could be borne, and steps were taken

accordingly. We know, for example, that revolts occurred among the Mitanni princes, and elsewhere in Asia, revolts which caused Amenhotep to march to Northern Palestine in the spring of 1447. At Shemesh-Edom he routed the princes of Lebanon, and then proceeded in a north-easterly direction towards the Euphrates, penetrating Mitanni. On his return to Memphis, the place of his birth, he brought with him over five hundred of the Syrian lords, two hundred and forty of their women, two hundred and ten horses and three hundred chariots, together with four-fifths of a ton of gold in vessels, and fifty tons of copper. Taking seven of the captive chiefs with him to be hung head downwards on the prow of his bark, he made his way in triumph up the Nile to Thebes, where he sacrificed the victims himself as a thankoffering to Amon. Having established his suzerainty in Western Asia, he next turned his attention to the southern extremity of the Empire in Nubia. It was probably just before this Syrian campaign in 1447 that the Hebrew captives effected their escape into the Arabian steppes.

Underlying the biblical traditions of the sojourn in Egypt and the Exodus there would seem to be a basis of actual reminiscence, however much some of the incidents may have been idealized and overlaid with legendary features. It is inconceivable that so fundamental an episode in the folk memory of a nation could be devoid of some foundation in fact, even after due allowance has been made for a certain amount of confusion between the Exodus and the Exile in post-exilic Israel. Moreover, the general outline of the narratives conform to contemporary history.

It is true that no certain references to the events have been discovered by Egyptologists, and every reconstruction encounters chronological difficulties. But, nevertheless, there is nothing unprecedented in a Semitic slave rising to power in Egypt in the Hyksos period, and while unquestionably there are strands of folk-romance and ethnological history in the Joseph narratives, it is by no means impossible that the story contains an element of authentic biography. Friendly relations between Egypt and Syria had extended over a long period prior to the XIIth Dynasty, as is shown by Egyptian objects in a temple at Byblos on the Syrian coast, and the mention of the town in the Osiris legend. Cedars were imported from Lebanon for the building of the temples and palaces, and oil from this region was employed in the funerary ritual. Although this intercourse was temporarily suspended from the VIIth to the XIIth Dynasties, the establishment of the Hyksos domination broke down the barriers separating the Nile valley from Western Asia, and the way was then open for an Aramæan settlement in such a district as the Wady Tumilat.

Similarly, once the yoke of the Shepherd Kings was removed, the Egyptians spared no pains in obliterating every vestige of the invasion. Consequently, the lot of any Semites who happened to be sojourning in the land was likely to be unenviable. While there is no direct evidence of the Hebrew oppression in Egyptian records, the circumstances suggest the sort of situation that is alleged to have occurred in the opening chapters of the book of Exodus. If the founder of the new dynasty (Ahmose I) was the Pharaoh who began the campaign, the era of oppression probably reached

its climax in the reign of Thutmose III in the fifteenth century. It was probably then that an inspired leader arose in the person of Moses who succeeded in leading the captives into the Arabian steppes on the south of Palestine, where they found themselves in a district uncommonly like their original home, and their temporary Egyptian abode in the land of Goshen.

The importance of the person and work of Moses, however, is such that it cannot be dealt with adequately at this stage in the present discussion. Furthermore, Moses belongs essentially to the consolidation of the tribes as a theocracy, and therefore it will be more appropriate to reserve an examination of his place in the life of the nation for that part of the course which will deal with the religion of Israel. Suffice it to say here and now that confusion about the period of the " wanderings " often arises from a misunderstanding of the sojourn in Egypt. In the first place it is surmised that the Hebrews were a very considerable nation instead of being, as was actually the case, a few thousand nomads. And secondly it is supposed, following the later E and P narratives, that they lived the life of fellahin city dwellers (Exod. xii. 4, 7, 23 ; ii. 1–10 ; Num. xi. 5 ; xx. 5 ; xxi. 5), whereas in reality, as the earlier J account makes plain, they were a pastoral community content to continue their customary habits on the grasslands and marshes adjoining the fertile valley (Gen. xlvi. 32, 34 ; xlvii. 3, 4, 6b, 27 ; Exod. viii. 18 ; ix. 26). Therefore, to return to the " wilderness " (*i.e.* the steppes) after their serfdom in the brickfields of Egypt was simply to take up again their former mode of life.

The idea that the original intention of Moses was

to lead them back to Palestine till the purpose was frustrated by an act of disobedience, is almost certainly a later misinterpretation of the actual situation. Indeed it is stated that both Moses and the children of Israel desired to remain permanently at Sinai, and that they had to be driven forth by Yahweh (Exod. xxxii. 34; xxxiii. 15). And in point of fact for a generation they appear to have made their home in the desert with fixed centres at Sinai (or Horeb, probably Seir), and Kadesh, where they found water and grass for their flocks. According to the J narrative, they arrived at Meribah-Kadesh three days after their flight from Egypt (Exod. xvii. 1–7; cf. Num. xxvii. 14; xx. 1, 13, 24), and this may have been their original objective (cf. Exod. iii. 18; v. 3; viii. 27). On the other hand, as we shall see in a subsequent lecture, there is strong reason to think that the holy mountain of Yahweh was in the Seir range,[1] and while this separated Kadesh from Sinai, it does not allow the distance between them required by E (Num. x. 33) and Deut. i. 2, and the events enumerated in Num. xxxiii. 16–36. But however difficult it may be to find any hypothesis that fits all the facts, the evidence points, as will be seen later, to the spiritual experience at Sinai consolidating the tribes into a nation, and so leading them to seek a settled existence in a promised land flowing with milk and honey.

[1] *Cf.* p. 93 f.

Chapter III

THE HEBREW SETTLEMENT IN PALESTINE

In order to place the biblical account of the Conquest of Palestine in its proper historical setting, I propose in this lecture to survey very rapidly the course of events in the Ancient World that led up to the situation which apparently lies behind the narratives in the books of Joshua and Judges.

Palestine, as we have seen, occupied a position in the Fertile Crescent midway between the great civilizations of the Euphrates and the Nile valleys, with a coast land within easy reach from the Ægean islands and the Mediterranean littoral. Moreover, to the surrounding nomadic tribes of the desert it was not without its attractions, offering as it did boundless opportunities for the adoption, either temporarily or permanently, of a settled agricultural life. Small wonder, then, that it was the meeting-place of many streams of culture, and of diverse types of mankind.

The recent researches of Miss Garrod and her colleagues have shown that the country has been the scene of human occupation from very remote times since, in addition to flint implements of various Palæolithic cultures from the Chellean to the Mesolithic, a skull of Neanderthal type has been found in Galilee, and important evidence has come to light concerning the opening, or Aurignacian, phase in the history of *Homo sapiens*. At the dawn of civilization

the first human stratum reveals a race of men of slight build and low stature who had domesticated the goat, sheep, cow, and pig, although they still lived in caves or very rude huts. Their relative smallness and the practice of cremation which they adopted differentiate them from the Semitic immigrants, who first established themselves as the Canaanites about 3000 B.C.

Although the country does not come into the full light of history until the Egyptian domination in the fifteenth century, foreign influences were felt on Palestinian culture in the third millennium. Sargon claims to have conquered the West from the Silver Mountains (the Taurus) to the Cedar Forest (Lebanon), and in Asia Minor he founded the Babylonian commercial colony of Kanis (Kul Tepe) on the great Anatolian trade-route. The conquests of Naram Sin (2875–2820) exceeded those of his great-grandfather, and, as we have seen, as early as 3000 B.C. nomadic tribes from the desert were settling in the pleasant coast land on the Western end of the Fertile Crescent, where they had erected walled cities by 2500. The famous Gebel Arak ivory knife-handle and the palette of Narmer reveal Mesopotamian influences in Egypt during the Old Kingdom, since while the workmanship is Egyptian, the figures represented are Elamite. The passage from the Nile to the Euphrates may have been made by sea from Byblos, but, on the other hand, the overland route would pass through Palestine.

Byblos was probably an Egyptian dependency ruled over by the Pharaohs of the Old and Middle Kingdoms, and it was to this port that the cedars of Lebanon were shipped. Towards the end of the XIth Dynasty

(*c.* 2000 B.C.) it appears that the city was among the Asiatic provinces that had broken away from the Empire, but, however close may have been the bond between Babylonia and Syria to 1900 B.C., the fall of Babylon marks the end of this régime. In the XIIth Dynasty Byblos was governed by an envoy of Pharaoh, and these monarchs controlled Palestine as well as Phœnicia. The situation is probably reflected in the romance of Sinuhe who is represented as having fled from Egypt at the death of Amenemhet IV (1970), traversed Syria, Palestine, and Phœnicia, not daring to stop till he was safely outside Egyptian territory in the land of the Amorites beyond Lebanon, *i.e.* in the mountains of Canaan. Here he was befriended by the chief Ammi-amis (My people is social).[1]

The Hyksos invasion followed, bringing with it hordes of nomadic peoples from the Eurasian grasslands (probably Transcaspia), mainly Semites in speech but doubtless gathering up all sorts of stray racial elements (Kassites, Hittites, and Mitannites) in their victorious march through Western Asia. In this new Empire, which in the days of Hiyan stretched from the Tigris to Upper Egypt, Palestine became an important district. In establishing their rule in the Ancient East these warriors set up a feudal nobility which survived the downfall of their kingdom. In this way is explained the persistence of Semitic, Hittite, and Indo-Aryan chiefs in Palestine after the subjection of the land by the Pharaohs of the XVIIIth Dynasty.

Enclosed in their walled cities the Canaanites were able to resist the attacks of their enemies, having

[1] Moret et Davy, *Des Clans aux Empires* (Paris, 1923), pp. 267 ff.

learned the art of erecting fortifications from the Babylonians, who in this respect were superior to the Egyptians. Thus, when the spies of Joshua reached the borders of "the promised land," they found the cities "walled up to heaven" (Deut. i. 28). It was not until Ahmose, the conqueror of the Hyksos, captured Sharuhen (Tell el Khueilf), and Joshua forced an entry at Jericho, that the country fell a victim to the invader. But once a breach was made the absence of political unity rendered resistance less organized, although it took sixteen campaigns for Thutmose III to capture Megiddo (Tell el-Mutesellim) in the north. However, with the subsequent fall of Kadesh (Tell Nebi Mendi), the Amorite capital, he established his rule over the whole land, though he allowed the local kings to govern their respective cities as his vassals.

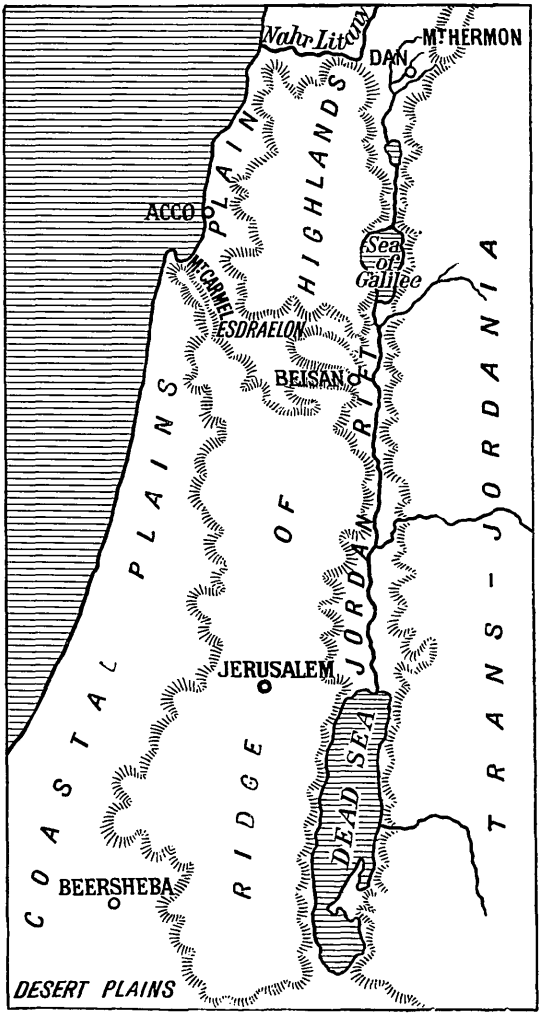
This was the condition that prevailed when the three hundred and sixty letters constituting the Tell el Amarna tablets were written, mostly in the cuneiform script of Babylonia, in the fourteenth century B.C., by Asiatic, Syrian, and Palestinian rulers to their overlord (Pharaoh), appealing for help against their hostile neighbours, who included the Hatti (Hittites) and the Habiru. It is these last people who have been the subject of controversy inasmuch as the name linguistically is related to *'ibri* (Hebrew). Sayce's attempt to equate it with "confederates" is not convincing, but the discovery of two Kassite names described as Habirians suggests the possibility of the Habiru having been Kassites, and therefore Indo-Aryan mercenaries. It may be that the word was originally a proper name meaning "those beyond,"

which was applied to nomads of any race from beyond the frontiers. It became associated with Israel perhaps because the tribe were "strangers" from the wilderness, and was Hebraized under the form *'ibri* to designate the invading Aramæans under Joshua.

It was probably after the reassertion of Egyptian sovereignty in Palestine had weakened the resistance of the Canaanite chiefs that the Hebrews turned their attention to the conquest of the land. According to the main narrative in the book of Joshua, Israel carried on a speedy war of extermination so that after a few campaigns complete possession of the country was obtained. But there are earlier passages in both this book and in Judges which spread the penetration over a protracted period and make the final product a fusion of the two cultures. This second hypothesis is the more probable, and, as we shall see in later lectures, it is supported by subsequent events in the history of Israel.

The Hebrew tribes under Joshua appear to have begun their attack on Palestine with the conquest of Transjordania (Plate V). Having made a circuit about the territories of Moab and Edom, they wrested by force the land of the Amorites from Sihon at Jahaz, an uncertain site near the Arnon, and they then took from Og the kingdom of Bashan still farther to the North (Deut. iii.). Whether these campaigns were undertaken independently by Transjordanian allies of Israel, and subsequently incorporated into the narrative of the Conquest as a single event, it is difficult to say,[1] but in any case the land was taken

[1] G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (London, 1897), pp. 577 ff.



PALESTINE.

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in successive invasions corresponding doubtless to a widespread convergence of Aramæans on Palestine from the East, South, North, and Centre. If any of the Hebrews did remain behind when the Joseph tribes went down into Egypt, as Burney contended, they would doubtless join their kinsfolk in the bid for the mastery.[1] From Gen. xxxviii. it would seem that Judah was settled in Canaan long before this time, and they may have made common cause with the Kenites and the other tribes from the South. It was perhaps this alliance which resulted in the conquest of the region south of Hebron.

Next came the Joseph tribes under Joshua as their leader. With Jericho as their objective they crossed the Jordan near the mouth of the Jabbok, but, as Cheyne pointed out many years ago,[2] why the waters should be stayed to afford them a passage is not very obvious, since a ford existed opposite the city which should have suited Joshua as well as it suited Jacob on an earlier occasion (Gen. xxxii. 22). It is probable, therefore, that the story of the miraculous crossing of the Jordan was suggested by some natural phenomenon, such as a landslide from the hills making a dam across the river which was elaborated into a supernatural

[1] C. F. Burney, *The Book of Judges* (London, 1920). Some of the Hebrew tribes, it is urged, settled in Egypt under the Hyksos rule and were driven out with them (=Abraham's return to Palestine, Gen. xii. 10–20). The Jacob tribes were driven out of Canaan by the Edomites (=Jacob's flight from Esau). They again invaded Palestine (=return of Jacob corresponding to the Habiru invasion in 1400), and the Joseph, probably with Simeon and Levi sections, migrated to Egypt, leaving behind the rest of the tribes.

[2] *Encyclop. Biblica,* Vol. II, Article "Jericho."

intervention when the narrative was written in later years.

The attack upon Jericho followed, and in this connexion interesting evidence has come to light as a result of Professor Garstang's recent excavations at the site (Plate V). "Though so massive," he says, "these walls were faulty in construction. The bricks were sun-dried, contained no binding straw, and varied greatly in size, though their thickness was fairly uniform and averaged about four inches. The foundations consisted generally of two or three layers of field stones, which lacked uniformity of size and were unevenly laid. On such a basis it was difficult to maintain regularity in the courses of the brick wall, in which accordingly gaps and differences of level were made good with mud mortar, though adjoining bricks were freely left by negligence without bond . . ., much of the wall, in particular its outer face, was founded upon débris. On foundations so unequal in strength, a certain amount of irregular subsidence was inevitable, as may now be seen, especially in view of the great weight and size of the wall itself, which, being twelve feet wide, probably rose to a height of twenty-five or thirty feet." [1] In these circumstances a collapse was almost inevitable, either as a result of earthquake or of undermining, since "the outer wall stood upon débris at the edge of the slope, and though six feet thick, its height and the weight of superincumbent houses made it a source of danger rather than an additional protection." [2]

[1] *Joshua–Judges* (London, 1932), p. 131.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 141.

THE WALLS OF JERICHO.

Reproduced by permission from "Joshua–Judges" by John Garstang, published by Constable & Co.

PLATE V

The outer wall suffered most, but the inner wall is preserved only where it abuts upon the citadel, or tower, to a height of 18 ft. The eastern wall was also entirely destroyed, but the northern and southern walls do not show any signs of having been affected. The district is known to have been subject to earthquakes, and as recently as 1927 a hotel collapsed in the city during severe shocks, the greatest of which occurred on Monday, July 11th, at 3.50, and was followed by milder shocks on the 13th, 17th, 24th, and August 2nd. If a disturbance of this nature was the cause of the collapse of the walls on two sides—and the observations indicate tremors east and west across the Rift as in 1927–28—it would be regarded almost certainly by the attacking Israelites as a supernatural event. But Professor Garstang is careful to point out that, although the site lies in the zone of earthquakes, the walls do not show much sign of such destruction. Nevertheless, the houses alongside them were destroyed by fire, while one sector had been apparently undermined. The important fact is that the walls fell outwards, thereby enabling the invaders to enter the city.

The archæological evidence suggests that the incident happened about the middle of the late Bronze Age (*i.e. c.* 1400 B.C.), slightly prior probably to the Habiru attacks mentioned in the Amarna Letters. Furthermore, it would seem from the absence of Early Iron Age remains at Jericho (1200–900 B.C.) that the place was abandoned, as the biblical narrative maintains, for some 500 years, except for a few houses on the north side of the ruins which appear to belong to the fourteenth century B.C. But it was not

until the ninth century that the fortifications were rebuilt.

The next move was to Ai at the head of the valley. Only traces of the foundations in heavy Bronze Age masonry, and the line of the rampart of this site, remain, though originally it was larger than Jericho. This perhaps explains the defeat at the first attempt to capture the city. The estimate of 3000 men employed on this campaign must be an exaggeration, since the normal strength of an Egyptian army was only 5000 men,[1] and the Canaanite cities could not have accommodated a population of over 3000 people. Probably the entire nation of Israel at this time did not exceed 6000 souls, of whom not more than 1500 constituted the fighting forces.[2] A casualty list of 36 out of 3000 would not have necessitated the withdrawal of the army from Ai (Joshua vii. 5), but if, as is probable, only a handful of men were sent to attack the place, the losses may have been proportionately heavy.

With the resumption of hostilities new tactics were adopted. A broken ridge of rocks obscures the road to the west of Ai, and behind this an ambush was placed. At the approach of dawn Joshua's forces were seen on the north side. Fleeing before the pursuing citizens the Israelites kept to the higher ground towards the north and east, and so gained a favourable spot for the counter-attack when the ambush had taken the city. "So Joshua burned Ai, and made it an heap for ever, even a desolation, unto this day" (Joshua viii. 28).

[1] *Anastasi*, I, xv. 17, 5.

[2] Garstang, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

The way was now open for an attack upon the central plateau. An alliance with Gibeon to the south-west of Bethel, and the associated Hivite cities, gave Joshua the key to his objective without attacking Bethel, which, according to the book of Judges (i. 22–26), fell into his hands later through a prisoner seized at the gate of the city. Although Jerusalem was well fortified, the king, Adoni-zedek, made a covenant with his Amorite neighbours, the kings of Hebron, Yarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon, to punish the Gibeonites, and doubtless also to defend himself against the invaders, just as Abd-Khipa in the Amarna Letters appealed to Pharaoh for help when he was beset by the Hatti and the Habiru. Joshua seized the opportunity of meeting the confederate kings on their punitive expedition to Gibeon. To come upon them suddenly just before dawn, he risked a forced march of twenty-five miles to a height of some four thousand feet from his camp at Gilgal. The scheme, however, was successful, and the battle ended in a route of the Amorite allies, immortalized in the poetic exhortation :

> Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon ;
> And thou, Moon, in the valley of Aijalon.
> And the Sun stood still, and the Moon stayed,
> Until the Nation had avenged themselves of their enemies.[1]

Nothing succeeds like success. Having conquered the southern portion of the land, it only remained to

[1] This is a poetical quotation taken substantially from the book of Jasher, comparable to the phrase in the Song of Deborah, " The stars in their courses fought against Sisera." To attempt to find some naturalistic interpretation of a supposed miracle is to miss the beauty and poetic significance of the passage.

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overcome the country north of the plain of Esdraelon (*i.e.* Galilee). Hazor, probably Tell el-Kedah discovered by Garstang in 1926, was the chief city in this region, and according to Joshua xi., a confederacy of kings from unidentified places were defeated by Joshua, but since a Jabin king of Hazor is said to have been an enemy of Israel in Judges iv. 2, it would seem not improbable that the conquest of Upper Galilee was not accomplished during the lifetime of the great leader, despite the fact that Garstang thinks that Joshua was responsible for the fall of Hazor.[1]

Taking the evidence collectively it seems that the series of events described in the book of Joshua is historically accurate in its main outlines. All the cities appear to have existed in the Bronze Age, and the excavations now being carried out in Palestine are bringing to light new identifications, or at least suggested identifications, such as, for example, the transference of the ancient Beeroth from El-bireh to Tell-en-Nasbe, where a Bronze Age stronghold apparently flourished. A great deal more archæological work will have to be done before definite conclusions can safely be drawn regarding many of these sites, but the data at present available certainly suggest that the background of Joshua's campaign is the fifteenth century B.C., when the Egyptian control over Palestine and Syria was waning.

The Amarna Letters show that at this time the country was being overrun with invading hordes called the Sa-gaz and the Habiru, and if these are not identical with the Hebrews, they may be brought into relation with them. It is very probable that

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 183.

among the Habiru were some of the tribes of Israel, especially as they are referred to as having conquered the land of Lapaya (*i.e.* the district of Shechem), and as attacking Jerusalem. Thus the prince of Gezer wrote to Pharaoh : " Let my lord the king, the Sun of heaven, care for his land, for the Habiru are very powerful against us ; and let my lord, the king, extend his hand to me, and rescue me from the hand of the Habiru, in order that the Habiru may not destroy us."

City after city fell and, according to the Amarna Letters, " the territory of Gazri (Gezer), that of Askalon, and the city of Lachish had given them food, oil, and all necessaries." The chief of Ke'ilah, between Yarmuth and Hebron to the south of Adullam, complained that his district was invaded, and his confederates had forsaken him. The king of Lachish was murdered by his servants who had gone over to the enemy ; the city of Rubute (? Hebron) had fallen, and " the last of the kings is lost to the Habiru." " Shall we then let Jerusalem fall ? " cried the despairing Abd-Hiba.[1]

This evidence accords with the hypothesis of a gradual conquest of the land by the Hebrew tribes. The first wave of invasion, having subdued Transjordania, Gilgal, and Jericho, proceeded northwards to the central plateau, and while the part played in this campaign by Joshua as the leader of the house of Joseph (which included Ephraim, Manasseh, and probably Benjamin, cf. 2 Sam. xix. 16 ff.) has probably been exaggerated by the later historians, that an

[1] H. Winckler, *Tell el-Amarna*, 1896, 185, 8–11 ; cf. S. A. Cook, *Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. II, pp. 312 ff.

initial attack was made from the east is supported by this approach having been adopted by nomadic tribes in later times (cf. Judges vi., vii.). The Judah and Simeon sections, like the Kenites, entered from the south, but found the way to further progress barred by the chain of fortresses from Gezer to Jerusalem. Partly by force of arms, and partly by forming alliances with the Canaanite chiefs, as in the Gibeon treaty, the Habiri, as they would be called collectively by the indigenous inhabitants, made their way to Shechem in the Amarna period, and gave rise to the situation reflected in the Letters. Strong cities such as Gezer, Ke'ilah, Lachish, Askalon, and Jerusalem, remained loyal to Pharaoh, but they were seriously menaced by the attacks of these desert mercenaries, and one by one they gave up the struggle and made terms with the invaders.

Since Egypt prepared the way for the Israelite domination in Palestine by breaking the strength of the native chiefs in reducing them to vassals and then leaving them to their fate at a critical moment, Garstang may be correct in his suggestion that the "hornet" which was sent to drive out the Amorites before Israel (Joshua xxiv. 12) was the Egyptian power; for the wasp or hornet (not the bee) was the symbol of Lower Egypt.[1] But once this was accomplished, the conquerors were quite prepared to fraternize with the people of the land and adopt their culture.

The idea of a wholesale war of extermination is purely the creation of later writers. The earliest account of the settlement (probably J) given in the

[1] *Joshua–Judges*, pp. 258 f.

opening chapter of Judges shows that there was no united attack accomplished in a few battles, but rather a series of invasions culminating in a composite civilization. From time to time there were periods of persecution (Judges xviii. 27), but "when Israel was strong they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out" (Judges i. 28). That the alternating periods of rest and oppression recorded in this book correspond to the decline and rise of Egyptian rule in Palestine, as Professor Garstang suggests, is only possible on the assumption that the existing chronological structure is original. If this could be maintained then the reign of Tutankhamen (1360–1320) might be made to cover the deliverance under Othniel; the eighty years of peace in the days of Ehud would represent the reigns of Seti I and Rameses II, and the accession of Merenptah (1221) would mark the decline of Egypt with the twenty-one years of tyranny under Sisera. Forty years of rest would follow with the restoration of Set Nekel and Rameses III (1200–1160), and when Egypt again lost control the Amalekites would be free to overrun Palestine, till peace was restored under Gideon. With the withdrawal of Egyptian rule from Syria forty years later the way would be opened for the growing power of the Ægean maritime civilization to invade the coast as the Philistines from Crete, who continued their attacks till the yoke was broken by David in 960 B.C.

This ingenious hypothesis overlooks the artificial character of the book of Judges, and if it represents the historical background, it is curious that no mention of it occurs in the biblical records. But the recent

excavations confirm the belief that the conquest and settlement took place in the thirteenth century B.C. The well-known phrases in the inscription celebrating the victory of Merenptah in the fifth year of his reign (1229)—"Israel is desolated, his seed is not; Haru (Palestine) is become as a widow before Egypt"—refers not to the Exodus, as was formerly supposed, but to the reassertion of Egyptian rule in the period of the Judges. Thus, Israel is mentioned in conjunction with three other Canaanite cities—"Ascalon is carried away, Gezer is led captive, Yanoam is brought to nought"—as though it were part of a confederation.[1]

It is most unlikely that any attempt to invade Palestine would be made till the strong hand of Thutmose III had been removed. If the Exodus occurred immediately after his death in 1447, the weakness of Egyptian rule in the subsequent period would encourage the conquerors to advance from the steppes of Transjordania between 1411 and 1375 B.C. in the reign of Amenhotep III. This accords with the Amarna evidence. Then began an era of assimilation from which in due course Israel emerged as a fusion of Hebrews and Canaanites with a complex culture representative of the dual strain in the population. To this subject we shall return in later lectures.

[1] Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt* (Chicago, 1906–7), Vol. III, p. 264.

Chapter IV

MYTH AND RITUAL OF THE ANCIENT EAST

Having placed the Hebrews in their historical framework, and traced in its main outlines a picture of the consolidation of the tribes into a nation and their settlement in the midst of Canaanite civilization, it now remains to reconstruct the religious situation in Israel in relation to the ritual and belief of the rest of the Ancient East. In the period of the monarchy, when the traditions of the Old Testament began to assume literary form, the fusion of the nomadic Aramæan tribes with the settled agricultural population in Palestine was so far complete as to have produced a composite culture which it is not always easy to separate into its component elements. In the past these records have been taken only too often in isolation from their context in history with the result that the crudeness of some of the Hebrew beliefs and customs has been magnified by comparison with the lofty religious and ethical standards of Christian civilization rather than with those of the surrounding nations at the corresponding cultural level. In this way the unique achievement of Israel in its struggle to attain monotheistic ideals has been obscured.

To gain a true perspective, then, we must begin our investigation with a study of the religious ideas and practices current among the peoples with whom the

nation was in close contact in its formative period. Apart from its own Aramæan ancestry, which we shall consider in the next lecture, the two most powerful influences upon Palestine and the surrounding district were those of Egypt and Babylonia. Therefore, it is to these great civilizations that we shall first turn for a background of the religion of the Ancient East.

To start with Egypt, the two most insistent facts in the Nile valley, and those in which the people saw their gods, are the sun and the river that made their land a fertile oasis in a veritable wilderness. Around these two phenomena a complex system of social and religious organization developed that has become a byword in the modern as well as in the ancient world. Even to the traveller to-day there is something awe-inspiring and " numinous " in a southern sun, and it is not surprising that " the all-enveloping glory and power of the Egyptian sun " called forth a deeply religious response in the souls of the Nile-dwellers so that they came to personify it as the supreme deity making his daily course across the sky, and bound up the life of the nation with it so completely that the reigning Pharaoh was nothing less than the physical son of Re, the Sun-god, summing up in his complex personality the attributes of all the gods.[1]

But the Nile was no less indispensable in a land that depended upon the annual inundation for its very life. The sun alone would be nothing but a menace unless its scorching rays were supplemented and rendered beneficent by the kindly waters of the

[1] K. Sethe, *Urgeschichte und älteste Religion der Ägypter* (Leipzig, 1930), pp. 87 ff., 97 ff. A. M. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, VII, 1921, pp. 15 ff.; XIII, 1927, pp. 219 ff.

great river which made the desert blossom as the rose. So the Nile was also equated with the divine creative powers, and regarded as the fertilizing fluids which oozed from the corpse of the culture hero Osiris, who, according to one version of the legend, was himself a king responsible for the introduction of a knowledge of agriculture together with that of the other blessings of civilization.[1]

The Heliopolitan theologians, on the other hand, connected him with the Sun-god who being lonely created Shu, the god of the atmosphere, and Tefnet, the goddess of moisture, from whom were born Keb, the earth-god, and Nut, the sky-goddess.[2] These in their turn begat Osiris, Isis, Set, and Nephthys. The two brothers married their sisters, so that Osiris became the husband of Isis, and Set the spouse of Nephthys. Keb then put into the hands of Osiris the government of the land, which aroused the jealousy of Set, who conspired against his brother. In the relatively late Plutarch version of the myth the exact measurement of Osiris had been taken by the conspirators, who had a chest made accordingly. On the occasion of a banquet the guests were invited to lie down in it by turns, with the offer of the gift of the chest to the one whom it was found to fit. As soon as Osiris entered, the lid was fastened down, and the box was thrown into the Nile, which carried it out to sea. Although no mention of this stratagem occurs

[1] Blackman, *Zeitschrift für Agyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*, Bd.50, 1912, p. 69. Plutarch, *de Isis et Osiri*, 12–20; cf. Frazer, *Golden Bough*, Pt. iv, Vol. II (London, 1914), pp. 3 ff.

[2] Breasted, *Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1912), pp. 10 ff.

in the Pyramid Texts, they agree that he was slain or drowned in the Nile through the treachery of his brother.

As soon as the news of the tragedy reached Isis, she set forth in quest of the body of her murdered husband. The Plutarch narrative extends her sorrowful wanderings to Byblos on the Mediterranean coast, whither the chest had drifted in the waters, but the Egyptian texts state that it was recovered "upon the shores of Nedyt," where he was slain. This may be an ancient name for Byblos, though it was later localized at Abydos, the Egyptian Oberammergau, where the Osirian passion play was performed with much pathos.[1] The lamentations of the two sisters over the mortal remains of their brother moved to pity the heart of Re, the Sun-god, and he sent Anubis, the funerary physician, to re-assemble the severed limbs of Osiris and embalm the body. At this point the story becomes very involved, but however and by whom the hero was resuscitated, Isis "drew forth from him his essence and made thereof an heir," Horus, who was destined to avenge the death of his father.

Through fear of Set Isis concealed her son in the marshes of the delta, and when, after many adventures, he grew to manhood, he engaged in mortal combat with Set. In the encounter he lost an eye, which was restored by Thoth, the god of wisdom, and champion of Osiris. Horus thereupon sought his father across the sea to offer him the eye he had sacrificed on his behalf. By this act of filial piety he raised him to life, as the eye contained the soul of Osiris. Hence-

[1] Breasted, *op. cit.*, p. 26. M. A. Murray, *The Osireion at Abydos* (London, 1904), pp. 8, 17 f.

forth the eye of Horus became the most potent vitalizing agent, second only to the beetle, or scarab, in sanctity. Set, however, disputed the legitimacy of Horus, and the case was tried before the gods in Heliopolis. Thoth refuted the allegation, and at the same time proved that Osiris was absolutely truthful and pure (" true of voice ") in deed and word. Thus triumphantly vindicated, the hero was set upon his throne and appointed by the gods the king and judge of the dead. In his victory every follower of Osiris hoped to share, believing that Thoth would present his case in like manner, and conduct the weighing of the heart in the " great scales " in the Hall of the Two Truths in such a way that it would be declared " true of word," *i.e.* innocent, before all the gods of heaven, earth, and the Tuat (underworld).[1]

Moreover, the king was not only the physical son of the Sun-god, but, as the solar and Osirian theologies were fused, he became also the embodiment of Horus, the son and avenger of Osiris. In fact, the reigning Pharaoh was equated with every divinity in a relationship comparable to that of Horus with Osiris, and in this divine capacity he exercised his high priestly functions. As a " living epitome of all that is divine in the Nile valley," [2] he summed up in his complex personality the attributes of all the gods he embodied. His life was so closely bound up with heaven and earth that he was regarded as the most effective mediator between men and the gods, and consequently it was his duty to perform in person the ceremonies

[1] Budge, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection* (London, 1911), Vol. I, pp. 305 ff.

[2] Foucart, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VII, p. 713.

upon which the agricultural prosperity of the community depended. In fact, "as far back as we can go we find ourselves in the presence of a conception of monarchy based solely upon the assimilation of the king to the gods." [1]

The fundamental difficulty in the interpretation of the Egyptian theory of the divine kingship lies in the hopeless confusion of thought and expression concerning the various symbolizations of Re. But, nevertheless, in all these syncretisms the Sun-god retained his essential character as the constant source of life and sustenance, whose creative powers were as manifold as they were continuous. Similarly, Osiris, as the personification of the waters of the inundation, was equated with the imperishable principle of life, and therefore with vegetation. As Breasted points out, the Egyptian tendency was always to think in graphic and concrete forms.[1] Osiris was depicted in the temple of Isis at Philæ with ears of corn springing from his dead body, while at Denderah he was represented first as a mummy swathed and lying on a bier ; then he was shown raising himself, and, finally, rising from a bowl between the wings of Isis with a male figure standing before him holding the *crux ansata*, the Egyptian symbol of life.[2] In all these aspects he was the lord and giver of life, typified in nature by the rising of the fertilizing waters of the Nile and the consequent renewal of vegetation ; and in the human order as the bestower of life beyond the grave.

Closely associated with these conceptions is the

[1] Breasted, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

[2] Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 27 ; Budge, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 31 ff.

primitive belief that the fertility of the crops and cattle is dependent upon the health and vigour of the divine king. As Frazer has shown, this notion is very widespread in agricultural communities,[1] and while there is no definite evidence that the Egyptian Pharaoh was actually killed when his powers began to decline, Professor Seligman has left no room for doubt concerning the existence of the custom among the Shilluk of the White Nile.[2] In this area the reigning monarch as the reincarnation and representative of Nyakang, the divine ancestor, "must not be allowed to become ill or senile, lest with his diminishing vigour the cattle should sicken and fail to bear their increase, the crops would rot in the fields, and man, stricken with disease, would die in increasing numbers."[3] Something analogous to the priesthood of Diana at Nemi would seem to have prevailed at one time, since any member of the Royal family could attempt to kill the king, and, if successful, to reign in his stead. In more recent times it was the duty of the king's wives to report the symptoms of loss of vitality to the Elders of the tribe, who thereupon acquainted the sovereign with his duty.

We know that ancient Egyptian influence has spread to the upper reaches of the Nile,[4] and while in Egypt there is no mention of the Shilluk practice, Pharaoh is represented as having direct control over the

[1] *Golden Bough*, Pt. III (Dying God), pp. 14 ff.

[2] *Cult of the Nyakang and the Divine Kings of the Shilluk* (Khartoum, 1911), pp. 216 ff. *Egypt and Negro Africa* (London, 1934), pp. 21 ff.

[3] *Cult of the Nyakang and the Divine Kings of the Shilluk* (Khartoum, 1911), p. 221.

[4] *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute*, 1913, p. 664. Seligman, *Egypt and Negro Africa*, pp. 7 ff.

fertility of the new crops. Thus, at the Festival of Min at Koptos he played the part of Horus to ensure a plentiful harvest,[1] and in the spring rites in honour of the resurrection of Osiris in the month of Khoiakh the renewal of the king's accession appears to have had a beneficial effect upon the growth of vegetation.[2] In all these ceremonies Pharaoh assumed the active rôle of Horus, the living king whose victory over Set secured the resurrection of Osiris, rather than that of the dead hero (Osiris), whose functions belonged essentially to the next life.

Around this death and resurrection theme the complex ritual systems of the Ancient East revolve. The central feature is the importance of the king for the well-being of the community. Thus, both in Egypt and Babylonia the monarch is divine and plays the part of the god whom he embodies in the great seasonal festivals. In the Old Testament this conception is spiritualized and brought into relation with the Messianic Hope of a Golden Age to come when the rule of Yahweh is established over a restored Israel.

The Annual Festival constitutes the climax of the religious activities of the year, and although the precise form of its celebration varies in different localities, and at different periods, the ritual conforms in its essentials to a common culture pattern consisting of the following elements :

(*a*) A recitation of the story of creation, or its dramatic representation.

(*b*) A struggle between a divine hero and his enemies.

[1] Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples* (London, 1923), pp. 182 f. ; cf. Gardiner, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, II, 1918, p. 125.

[2] Gardiner, *op. cit.*, 1915, p. 124.

(*c*) The death and resurrection of the hero god.

(*d*) A sacred marriage between the triumphant god and the Mother Goddess symbolizing the divine powers of fertility.

(*e*) A triumphant procession, in which the king plays the part of the god going forth conquering and to conquer.[1]

Let us take by way of illustration the New Year rites in Babylonia, a civilization with which Israel was in close relationship from the earliest times to the days of the Exile. As in the Nile valley, fertility of the soil in Mesopotamia depended on irrigation. Therefore, like Osiris, the youthful hero-god Tammuz, who represents the decline and renewal of nature, is equated with the beneficent waters that flooded the Euphrates valley in winter and ebbed away in summer.[2] It was during the summer drought that the death of Tammuz was celebrated, when the productive powers died down, and Ishtar, the Mother Goddess—the Babylonian Isis—wandered in barren fields and desolate sheep-folds during her sorrowful search for her son. It is not surprising that in the days of the Exile women were seen "weeping for Tammuz" (Ezek. viii. 14), during the month that bore his name, inasmuch as the whole course of nature hung in the balances. It was, therefore, with a sense of relief and unrestrained joy that a feast was observed in the spring in commemoration of his restoration and the

[1] Cf. *Myth and Ritual*, ed. S. H. Hooke (Oxford, 1933), for a discussion of this culture pattern in the Old Testament. The same theme has been worked out in detail in its Christian application in my *Christian Myth and Ritual* (Murray, 1933).

[2] Langdon, *Tammuz and Ishtar* (Oxford, 1914), pp. 5 f.

return of the Mother Goddess, when the rising flood and lengthening days brought life and light out of death and darkness.

Since the New Year, or *akitu*, Festival is essentially an Easter Feast, the prevailing note is that of life triumphant over death. In Babylonia, as elsewhere, it was the restoration of the dead god that was accomplished by the series of ceremonies in which the king played the chief rôle. Early in the rites the epic of creation was recited setting forth the struggle between Marduk, son of Ea, "lord of the nether seas," and Tiamat, the Babylonian Set. Armed with a lightning fork, Marduk engaged in mortal combat with the winged monster and her demons. When he ultimately prevailed, he divided her body into two parts from which he made heaven and earth. Then he proceeded to fashion man out of the blood of her lover, Kingu, so that the human race had a dual ancestry.[1]

It was this creation story that was re-enacted in the temple of Marduk at Babylon during the New Year Festival in the beginning of Nisan (March). Nebo, the god's son, was brought from his temple at Borsippa to rescue his father (Marduk), and other gods joined in the fray, while the faithful engaged in ceremonial combats, as in more recent times in Europe on Shrove Tuesday.[2] Though the evidence on this point is

[1] F. Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels accadiens* (Paris, 1921), pp. 86 ff., 127 ff. F. D. H. Zimmern, *Zum Babylonischen Neujahrsfest*, 1 und 2 Beiträge (Leipzig, 1906, 1918). Langdon, *The Babylonian Epic of Creation* (Oxford, 1923), pp. 67 f.

[2] Ceremonial football matches and tugs-of-war have been a feature of Shrovetide observances within living memory at such

obscure, it seems probable that the god and his divine bride contracted a sacred marriage after the conflict, the purpose of which was directly connected with the rising of the fructifying waters of the irrigation system, as in the Tammuz ritual, where the marriage of the youthful god to Ishtar was transferred to the winter solstice to induce generation in all life at the turn of the year.[1] Finally, the festival ended with a procession along the *via sacra* from the Temple (Esagila) to the Festival House, the king " taking the hand of Bel " to conduct the statue of the god on its litter to the barge in which, like Pharaoh on his way to the temple of Amon-Re at Karnak, he was to perform the concluding rites.

Although many details are unknown, the circumstances of the Festival, taken in conjunction with the texts, show that the dramatic representation was the enactment of the Creation Epic setting forth the death and resurrection of Marduk along the lines of the Tammuz myth in order to renew the life of the gods in heaven that they might continue their beneficent functions on earth. In this case it was a magical ceremony to secure a renewal of vitality by a repetition of what was done in the beginning by the gods. Thus, by imitating the creative process at its source in a concrete ritual upon which gods and men alike depended for their continuance and well-being, the whole cycle of operations was renewed at the New Year. In this way the forces of decay and death were

places as Derby, Chester-le-Street, Ashbourne, and Ludlow in this country.

[1] Langdon, *Tammuz and Ishtar* (Oxford, 1914), pp. 27, 64. Cf. C. J. Gadd, *Myth and Ritual* (Oxford, 1933), pp. 56 f.

destroyed and the life of man, beast, and nature revivified.

The recitation of the Creation Epic secured the release of Marduk and the life-giving powers under his control. The cutting off of the heads of two figures before Nebo on the sixth day of the feast at the time of the combats symbolised probably the overcoming of the forces of decay and death. As Horus championed the cause of Osiris, so Marduk fought and conquered Tiamat, and it was this rôle of the victorious hero that was played by the king in the ceremonies. Originally perhaps he was slain, but later the barbarous rite was transformed into a ritual act of humiliation before the gods through which the monarch renewed his strength, saved his life, and retained his throne.

In the adjacent Semitic cultures in Syria and Palestine, this ritual pattern is less apparent though it is by no means non-existent. We have seen in former lectures that the Holy Land was subject to culture contact from the great river valley communities. True, sometimes this influence has been exaggerated, as, for instance, when Völter endeavoured to prove that the worship of Yahweh was merely an adaptation of Egyptian mythology to the requirements of a Hebrew setting. On this hypothesis, the God of Sinai corresponds to Khepera, the youthful Sun-god in the form of a winged beetle rising in the East like the spring equinox emerging from the winter solstice. The God of the ark becomes Osiris in his coffin, while Moses is Thoth.[1] This, of course, is merely imagination

[1] D. Völter, *Aegypten und die Bibel* (Leiden, Brill., 1907), 3rd Edition.

run riot, for, however real Egyptian influence may have been on the religion of Israel, it was more negative than positive, in the sense that Moses endeavoured apparently to direct worship to Sinai and away from Heliopolis and Thebes, just as his mono-Yahwist successors in Palestine refused to have any dealings with the Babylonian pantheon. In point of fact most of the contacts with the culture pattern of the Ancient East came through Semitic Canaanite sources, and it is therefore in a very mutilated form that it reappears in the Old Testament, mainly as survival of certain elements which often have completely changed their original meaning and significance.

Traces of Egyptian domination have been found in every stratum at Gezer after the first Semitic level [1] revealing penetrations from the Nile valley from the middle of the second millennium onwards. The famous cedars of Lebanon attracted traders in quest of wood for the ships of the Egyptian navy, while Syrian caravans and Phœnician vessels made return visits to the Egyptian markets and came back filled with merchandise of every kind. These commercial enterprises disseminated religious ideas, as is shown by the amulets which constituted some of the objects traded between the two countries. Thus, numerous scarabs, ushabti figures, Horus eyes, incense-burners, and similar cult objects of Egyptian manufacture have been found in Palestinian sites,[2] while the discovery of a mould of the god Bes

[1] Macalister, *Excavation of Gezer* (London, 1912), II, p. 307.

[2] Cf. A. Lods, *Israel* (E. T. by S. H. Hooke; London, 1932), pp. 66 ff., 92 ff., 117 f., 138 f.

(the Egyptian Puck) shows that there must have been a considerable demand for these statues in Canaan [1] (Plate VI).

In tombs of the XIIth Dynasty at Byblos sickle-shaped objects, called by the Greeks *harpé*, have come to light, one of which was ornamented with an Egyptian uræus,[2] and another contains a Semitic name, Ipshemuabi, in hieroglyphics [3] (Plate VI). At Gezer the same weapon occurs on cylinder-seals,[4] and similar examples have been found at Nablus.[5] *Harpe* were employed as symbols of authority by Assyro-Babylonian rulers and deities,[6] and a seal of Atanahili, king of Taanach, contains an inscription in cuneiform describing the monarch as a servant of the Babylonian god Nergal, while in the next column hieroglyphs occur.[7] The king is dressed in Egyptian garments and holds a Babylonian *harpé* in his hand. In a stele of Mikal, the Canaanite god of Bethshan (Plate VII), not only is there the same characteristic mixture of Semitic and Egyptian features, but the inscription records offerings made by the king on behalf of the ka of the builder of the temple to Mikal, the great god, that he may give life and health, and that the father may reach

[1] A. Bertholet, *Histoire de la civilisation d'Israël* (Paris, 1929), pp. 97 ff. H. Vincent, *Canaan après l'exploration récente* (Paris, 1914), pp. 171, 181. S. A. Cook, *The Religion of Ancient Palestine*, etc. (London, 1930), pp. 93 ff., 98.

[2] *Syria*, 1922, pp. 282 f., 286, 301.

[3] G. Contenau, *La civilisation phenicienne* (Paris, 1926), pp. 56, 154.

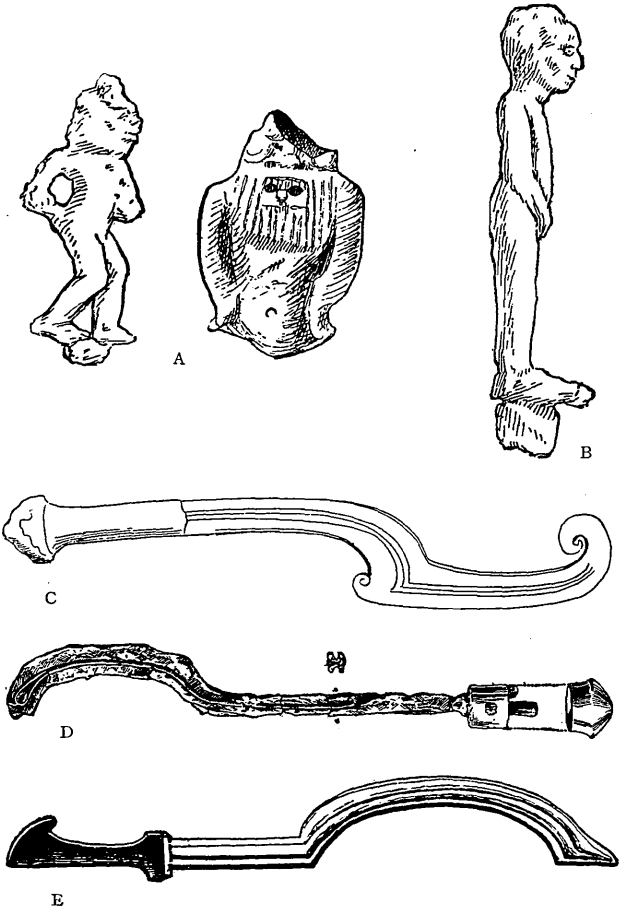
[4] Cook, *Cambridge Ancient History*, II, p. 330.

[5] *Op. cit.*

[6] Petrie, *Tools and Weapons* (London, 1917), pl. 28.

[7] Sellin, *Tell Tanannek* (Vienna, 1904), p. 28.

PLATE VI



A. EGYPTIAN STATUE, BES. B. EGYPTIAN STATUE, PTAH.
C. BABYLONIAN HARPÉ. D. HARPÉ FROM BYBLOS.
E. HARPÉ FROM GEZER.

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Facing p. 60

his place in peace.[1] Here is a typical Osirian funerary oration addressed to a Palestinian deity.

The cuneiform tablets recently unearthed at Ras Shamra, the site of the ancient Syrian port of Ugarit, composed towards the middle of the second millennium B.C., have now shown that the death and resurrection ritual pattern existed in Syria about the time of the Amarna period. The site reveals the same fusion of cultures displayed in the cases just mentioned. Thus, a figurine of the god Resheph with a Hittite cap similar to the Egyptian deity, and a plaque of Astarte with Hathor headdress, are among the objects found, together with a Mycenæan ivory of the Mother Goddess with ears of corn in her hand, and a goat on either side, and an Egyptian hawk bearing the double red and white crowns, or a smaller one with uræus between its feet.[2] At present only two out of the five tablets have been deciphered and edited by the French Semitist, Charles Virolleaud, but it is clear that the text, written partly in Sumerian and partly in a very obscure Phœnician, or possibly a proto-Semitic dialect, contains a poem describing the combat between a fertility sky god, Aleyan son of Baal, and his enemy Mot, son of El, " lord of barren and rainless wastes."

The poem opens with the selection of a new king to take the place of Aleyan-Baal, who has been

[1] A. Rowe, *Revue Biblique*, 1928, pp. 512 ff.; 1929, pp. 86 ff. Cf. Cook, *Religion of Ancient Palestine*, etc., p. 95.

[2] *Syria*, XII, 193 ff.; XIII, 113 ff. *Quarterly Statement Palestine Exploration Fund*, July, 1932, pp. 154 ff. Albright, *Journal of Palestine Oriental Society*, XII, 1932, pp. 185 ff. T. Gaster, *Journal Royal Asiatic Society*, Oct., 1932, pp. 857 ff. *Folk-Lore*, Dec., 1933, pp. 379 ff.

ousted by Mot. As a result of his deposition the earth is languishing from lack of "life-breath" so that "the land is now waste prairie, a very desert place." To overcome this disastrous situation 'Anat, the Virgin war-Goddess, intervenes. She approaches Mot, who feigns ignorance of the whereabouts of her brother, and tries to persuade her to go to the underworld in search of water to revive the earth. The gods, however, convict Mot, and 'Anat then seizes him, rips him with her sword, places fragments of his flesh in a sieve, or winnowing fan, burns him in the fire, grinds him in the mill, and scatters him over the fields, like the dismembered body of Osiris in the Plutarch myth. At this point the text becomes fragmentary, but it would seem that a prolonged contest ensued between Aleyan-Baal and Mot. At length the hero (Aleyan) is restored as king and judge, the processes of vegetation are revived, temples are built in his honour, and sacrifices offered for seven days. His throne is then prepared by Asherah, the consort of El, "the old man of the sea" (*i.e.* El Khadir), who takes her place at the right hand of Aleyan.

Brief as is this outline of the legend, enough has been published to show that it conforms to the Tammuz-Osiris cycle. The conquest of Mot can hardly be other than the Syrian version of the capture of Tiamat in the Babylonian story, and reflects the struggle between the beneficent forces of fertility and those of aridity and drought. The triumph of Mot suggests that the drama was enacted at the turn of the year when the winter rains were about to begin (*i.e.* in the month of Tisri, October). Therefore it was a New Year rite representing the victory of a god who

THE STELE OF MIKAL, GOD OF BETHSHAN.

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Facing p. 62

had passed through death and brought life to a dying world. But not only is Aleyan-Baal lord of rain and verdure,[1] he is the revivified soil, and it would seem that Mot, while still being the evil genius of barrenness, has become equated with the new crops. Thus he is reaped, threshed, winnowed, and ground to powder, and then given dominion over "earth" (*erets*).[2] The association of Aleyan with Asherat in the final scene may be a relic of a sacred marriage which so frequently marks the ultimate victory of the hero-god, and the conclusion with the erection of a temple and a seven-day festival is true to type. The evidence suggests, therefore, that the Ras Shamra tablets contain part of a New Year and Coronation ceremony, the purpose of which is to maintain the prosperity of the community along the lines of the divine kingship. Thus, the Mother Goddess, Asherat, proclaims :

> Wise El hath accorded thee wisdom ;
> Along with immortality hast thou gotten it as thy portion !
> He hath accorded it unto thee, O Aleyan-Baal,
> That thou shouldst be our king,
> That thou shouldst be our judge and none beside.[3]

Hitherto this culture pattern of the vegetation-god who dies annually and is reborn, has not been discovered in Palestine, but we are now left in little

[1] First Tablet, IV, 3. Second Tablet, VI, 6.

[2] Second Tablet, II, 3–20 ; VIII, 5–14. "Erets" which is translated "earth" by Virolleaud and Dussaud (cf. *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 1932, CV, pp. 245 ff.) is rendered "underworld" by Gaster (*Folk-Lore*, XLIV, 1933, p. 385).

[3] Second Tablet, IV, 41 ff.

doubt that it lay behind the pre-Israelite ritual, and from this source it penetrated the Hebrew confederation in the days of the monarchy. It may be that Tammuz was identified with Eshmun in Palestine,[1] and his cult was certainly established at Byblos.[2] But the Hebrew tradition was so essentially Aramæan that an agricultural worship was always really a foreign element, however attractive it may have been after the settlement in Canaan. To the great monotheistic leaders of Israel the whole pattern of myth and ritual was tainted at its source, and consequently they did their best to remove it from their midst. Success, however, was not attained without a struggle as desperate as that between Marduk and Tiamat, Horus and Set or Aleyan and Mot. But ultimately they prevailed, as we shall see in the subsequent lectures, and so made possible the reassembly of the fundamental elements in the ancient myths around the Figure of a spiritual King " incarnated once and for all in order ever after to rule over the souls of men." In this ritual pattern the deep strivings of the human heart found expression, but before they could find their perfect fulfilment in a metaphysical and ethical religion, the polytheistic trappings had to be cleared away, and a new vision of the righteous God of all the earth vouchsafed. " In the adoration of God," as Kennett has said, " Israel is the spokesman for the world."

[1] Baudissin, *Adonis und Esmun* (Leipzig, 1911).
[2] Cook, *Cambridge Ancient History*, II, p. 347.

Chapter V

THE RELIGION OF THE NOMAD HEBREWS

Passing from the myth and ritual of the great civilizations of the Ancient East to the religion of the nomadic pastoral cultures, we are confronted with an initial difficulty in the absence of contemporary documentary evidence and a paucity of archæological material. Fortunately, however, while the nomad Hebrews have left no written records or material objects which can with certainty be assigned to the desert period of their history, the later literature contains numerous references to ancient customs and beliefs. It is possible, therefore, to reconstruct the religious conditions of the Hebrew tribes before their settlement in Palestine by examining these later narratives in the light of our knowledge of Semitic cult as it was practised by the Aramæans.

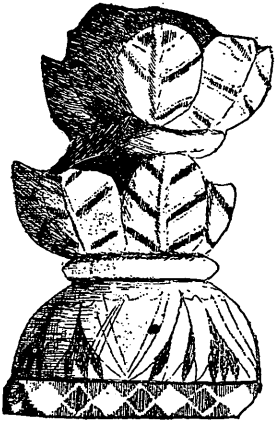
The Semites we know were essentially an animistic people, and from the patriarchal traditions of Genesis it seems clear that the Hebrews shared with the rest of their stock a belief in spiritual beings associated with certain natural objects. Thus, the crises in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were all connected with sacred stones, trees, wells, and springs, and although the narratives in their present form have been given a monotheistic interpretation, the original beliefs are still apparent.

At every sanctuary one or more stones were set up and regarded as the abode of an indwelling *El*, or supernatural being, and treated accordingly. Thus, when Jacob on his way to Haran lighted upon a megalithic monument and tarried there all night, in a numinous condition after his remarkable dream, he rose up early in the morning and took the stone he had used as a pillow, and " set it up for a pillar and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of the place Bethel " (Gen. xxviii. 10–22).[1]

To appreciate the significance of this incident it is necessary to place it in its proper historical context. The origin of megalithic monuments is still a matter of acute controversy among archæologists, but whether the stone-lined grave, or dolmen[2] (Plate VIII), is the beginning or end of a sequence diminishing or increasing in complexity, there can be no possibility of doubt that it is a tomb at which funerary rites of some kind were performed. Since it was an abode of the dead, provision had to be made for the after life of the person buried therein. In many parts of the world an effigy of the deceased has been regarded as an essential part of the equipment of a grave in order that the soul may have either a temporary or permanent habitation when the body decays and goes to dust. Among primitive people a wooden post carved in a rough, and sometimes a grotesque representation of

[1] The same verb (*mashach*) used for this ritual act is employed by Arabs to denote the stroking of a menhir (standing stone).

[2] A dolmen consists of two or more upright stones covered with a capstone. " Wayland Smith's cave " on the Berkshire Downs, or Kit's Coty House in Kent, may be quoted as a familiar example of this class of megalithic monument in the south of England.



A CENSER.

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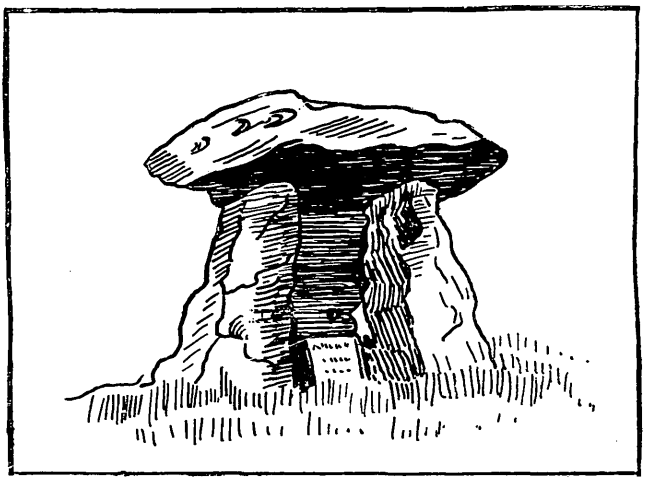

A DOLMEN (KIT'S COTY HOUSE, KENT).

the dead man suffices, but in Ancient Egypt the tissues of the mortal remains were preserved by an elaborate process of mummification, and a portrait statue constructed reproducing the actual likeness of the person. To make the mortal body put on immortality a ceremony known as " the opening of the mouth " of the mummy had to be performed in which life-giving agents such as oil, incense, and water played a prominent part.

Something of the same kind in all probability lies behind the unction of the sacred stone in the Jacob story. Just as the soul-figure was re-animated by offerings of vitalizing substances, so menhirs (or bætyls) were anointed to renew the vigour of the indwelling spirit.[1] Thus, a cultus grew up around these sacred objects which lingered on in Europe well into the Christian era, and still survives among primitive people. At Côtel, Guernsey, for example, a menhir was found in the last century under the chancel, and it was then solemnly erected outside the parish church where it still stands. In the magnificent Romanesque church of San Vicente at Avila in Spain the tomb of the patron saint (St. Vincent) is erected over a rude stone monument in the crypt. Similar cases occur at Santa Cruz de Congas de Oñis in Asturias, where a dolmen forms the crypt of a small church, while 25 miles from Bilbao is the hermitage of San Miguel de Arrechiuaga, within the nave of which stand three huge menhirs, occupying a space of more than 100 ft. in circumference,

[1] In my *Origins of Sacrifice* (Murray, 1933) I have produced evidence to show that this is a fundamental conception in the primitive institution of sacrifice.

and measuring respectively 29 ft., 18 ft. and 14 ft. in height. There is reason to think, in fact, that the famous Spanish shrine of St. James in Galicia owed its origin to the megalithic monuments in the neighbourhood of Santiago de Compostela.[1]

Since examples of this kind from Christian sources could be multiplied almost indefinitely, it is hardly surprising that so persistent a tradition should occur in the patriarchal narratives of the Old Testament which reflect a time so much nearer to the origins of the cult. Moreover, the Bethel incident is by no means the only indication of the veneration of sacred stones among the Hebrews. Thus, Joshua "took a great stone and set it up in Shechem under the oak that was in the sanctuary of Yahweh. And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold this stone shall be a witness against us; for it hath heard the words of Yahweh which he spake unto us; it shall therefore be a witness against you, lest ye deny your god" (Joshua xxiv. 26 f.).

In its present form a monotheistic turn is given to the narrative, but the reference to the menhir having heard the words spoken as a witness against the people suggests an earlier belief in the stone as an embodiment of a divinity capable of reanimation by appropriate rites, and so restored to consciousness like a portrait statue, as occasion demanded. The same conception recurs in the erection of a pillar or cairn by Jacob and Laban as a witness of the

[1] Cf. Fleure, *Human Geography in Western Europe* (London, 1910), p. 91. Peake, *Folk-Lore*, XXX, 1919, pp. 208 ff. Howes, *Folk-Lore*, XXXVI, 1915, pp. 132 ff. James, *Folk-Lore*, XLIII, 1932, pp. 273 ff.

covenant made between them, and ratified by a sacred meal on the stones. "And Laban said to Jacob, behold this heap, and behold the pillar, which I have set betwixt me and thee: This heap be witness and the pillar be witness that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm. . . . And Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mound, and called his brethren to eat bread" (upon the heap) and tarried there all night (Gen. xxxi. 51 ff.; cf. 46). Or, again, it was apparently at, or in association with, a stone circle, or gilgal, that Joshua performed the ancient rite of circumcision as an initiation ceremony at the threshold of the Promised Land (Joshua v. 4–7, 10; cf. iv. 20).[1]

Mazzeboth (standing stones) are mentioned as existing also at Mizpeh, Gibeon, and En-Rogel, and it is clear from the later writers that they were connected with a cultus. The Deutero-Isaiah, for instance, at the close of the Exile, speaks of libations being offered to menhirs by idolatrous Israelites (Isa. lvii. 6), and the Deuteronomist orders the sacred pillars to be destroyed with the groves and images of alien gods (Deut. xii. 3). Thus it would seem that a cultus that is taken for granted among the nomad Hebrews is viewed in a very different light in the settled community; a contrast incidentally which suggests that behind the patriarchal narratives there is a tradition

[1] Behind this narrative there lies probably a tradition concerning a circle of twelve stones. The numerous sacred places called *gilgal* (hag-gilgal, "the circle") were megalithic sanctuaries, one of which, it is related, was erected by Joshua, who seems to have been following ancient custom in setting it up after crossing the Jordan.

that was certainly not invented by the compilers of the records in their present form.

The precise connexion between the *mazzebah* and the altar is not very easy to determine, but it seems that the two were closely associated in origin. In Canaanite sanctuaries one of the sacred stones was sometimes used as an altar, but a more primitive practice was adopted apparently by Saul when he erected a pillar at which animals were sacrificed. "The same was the first altar that he built to the Lord" (1 Sam. xiv. 35). Doubtless, as offerings of oil, incense, and water were made to revivify the dead, so the pouring out of sacrificial blood (the life-giving agent *par excellence*) at a sacred stone or altar was thought to renew the vitality of the god thus approached.

In Semitic cult, as among other primitive people, it was commonly supposed that the deity was not of his own nature immortal and self-existent. Hence the need of sacrificial offerings to give nourishment to mortal gods. This was the motive behind the practice of human sacrifice, a custom that was all too prevalent among the Canaanites and the kindred tribes, as is shown by the frequent discovery of the bodies of children in the foundation of buildings in Palestinian sites (cf. Joshua vi. 26; 1 Kings xvi. 34). In the case of these foundation sacrifices, the oblation probably gave strength to the walls of the house or city as well as to the protecting divinities. But the references in the later books of the Old Testament to the passing of children through the fire to Moloch show that the rite was not confined to building operations. The redemption of the firstborn in Israel

(Exod. xiii. 13, 15) is probably a survival of a grim practice that prevailed in earlier times, and subsequently was replaced by the offering of an animal victim. "All that openeth the matrix being males I sacrifice to the Lord; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem."

The collection of ancient Hebrew laws known as *The Book of the Covenant*, incorporated in the E document of Exodus (xx. 22–xxiii. 33), seems to reflect a time when Yahweh was thought to claim the firstborn sons: "The firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto me" (Exod. xxii. 29). The story of the offering of Isaac (Gen. xxii. 1–19), though probably in the form of an eighth century prophetic Midrash, is also from E, and while the substitution of an animal as the redemptive price of the human victim is emphasized, the view that the incident is recorded to teach that human sacrifice was repugnant to Yahweh, is without serious foundation. There is nothing in the narrative to suggest this interpretation. Isaac is spared because his father was found to be equal to the supreme test to which he was subjected, and behind the ram episode there is probably an ancient legend to account for rams being sacrificial animals.

The case of Jephthah's daughter shows that a vow to Yahweh could be carried to its ultimate conclusion by a zealous father (Judges xi. 30 ff.), and it is possible that, as late as the time of the rebuilding of Jericho, Hiel inaugurated and finished the work with the customary foundation sacrifices, offering his firstborn beneath the walls of the city and his youngest son under the gates (1 Kings xvi. 34). If practices of this kind survived well into the period of the

settlement, they can hardly have been non-existent in the nomadic community.

Any doubts that might be entertained about this are dispelled by the circumstances surrounding the annual commemoration of that terrible night when it was supposed that the angel of Yahweh set forth on his bloody campaign to destroy all the firstborn of the Egyptians (Exod. xii. ; Deut. xvi. 1–8). That the observance has its origin in a very primitive ritual is now generally agreed by scholars, and signs are not wanting in the narratives pointing to this conclusion. According to the earliest tradition, the Hebrews' original request was to go into the wilderness to sacrifice, and if the feast was that on which the firstborn were offered, it affords an explanation of the tenth plague. Yahweh takes the firstborn of the Egyptians and of their cattle in exchange for those of the flocks which the Hebrews were prevented from offering to him. In this way may also be explained the references to the Passover as an established institution before the Exodus (Exod. iii. 18, v. 1, vii. 16, xii. 21). In any case, as Frazer says, "the one thing that looms clear through the haze of this weird tradition is the memory of a great massacre of firstborn." [1] In course of time it was modified into a yearly offering of the firstlings in certain localities, such as in Judah, where the pastoral tradition was strong, and eventually it became amalgamated with the agricultural festival of unleavened bread, after it was brought into prominence by the discovery of the Deuteronomic code in the time of Josiah. Even to this day the killing of the firstborn of the flock is the

[1] *Golden Bough*, Pt. IV (Dying God), p. 176.

occasion of a great feast among the Amur Arabs,[1] and there are traces of human beings having been offered in ancient Arabia.[2] Therefore, all things considered, it seems very likely that the nomad Hebrews practised sacrificial rites of this nature before their entry into Palestine.

Another aspect of Semitic worship closely associated with the altar and the *mazzebah* is the cultus of the sacred pole or *asherah*. These two objects generally stood side by side in the sanctuary, but the *asherim*, like Woodhenge on Salisbury Plain, have not withstood the ravages of time. But we are told in the book of Judges that Gideon burnt an *asherah* which was erected by the altar of Baal in the high place of Ophrah (vi. 25 ; cf. Deut. vii. 5), and in the Louvre may be seen the model of a Semitic (Babylonian ?) sanctuary equipped with an alignment of four posts, three of which are in the shape of trees with lopped branches.

In Arabia among the Amorites the *asherah* apparently was a goddess, connected in all probability with Astarte (the biblical Ashtoreth), the Great Mother, or Isis-Ishtar of Canaan and the surrounding district. In her temples orgiastic rites were held in spring and autumn, probably in association with the *asherim*,[3] and the figurines of the goddess (Astarte figures) were

[1] S. I. Curtiss, *Primitive Semitic Religion To-day* (London, 1902), p. 205.

[2] Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums gesammelt und erläutert* (Berlin, 1897), p. 116.

[3] The term was also used in the O.T. of male figures (cf. Jer. ii. 27, " thou art my father "), but if the *asherah* and *mazzebah* had a common origin in the portrait statue it would serve equally the purposes of a male or female cultus.

widely employed as fertility charms, judging from the number of them found in sites like Gezer, Taanach, Megiddo, etc. A pastoral people such as the nomad Hebrews would readily resort to " household gods " of this character, and I would venture to suggest that the so-called *teraphîm*, which Rachel stole from her father before returning to Palestine with her husband, were Astarte figures (Gen. xxxi. 19, 30 ; cf. xxxv. 2, 4). If she attributed the birth of Joseph to the eating of mandrakes (Gen. xxx. 14–24)—a renowned fertility charm associated in Greek tradition[1] with Aphrodite, the Hellenic counterpart of Astarte—it is reasonable to think that she would wish to retain the equivalent " household gods " of her father's house that she might be fruitful and multiply in her new home, especially as she was prone to barrenness (Gen. xxx. 1).

The word *teraphîm*, like *asherah*, was also used to designate a male object, as, for instance, in the case of the image that Michal put into her husband's bed to deceive the emissaries of Saul (1 Sam. xix. 13, 16). This must have been of the size and appearance of a man, while the gods of Micah seem to have been the rulers of the family (Judges xvii. 4, xviii. 24). But so far as the " household gods " of the nomad Hebrews are concerned, it may well be that they were Astarte figures.[2]

The sacred tree was another animistic object which

[1] Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament* (London, 1918), ii., pp. 375 ff.

[2] The mysterious ephod is also called teraphim (Hos. iii. 4), possibly because it denotes some kind of oracular object overlaid with gold, and therefore assigned life-giving powers since gold is a vitalizing agent in primitive cult.

played a prominent part in Semitic cult, and is frequently mentioned in the ancient narratives of the Old Testament. Thus, it was to the terebinth "of Moreh" (the turpentine tree of oracle) at Shechem that Abraham resorted on his arrival in Palestine to seek for guidance. For a similar oracular reason the oak at Mamre was selected as the site of an altar to Yahweh (Gen. xiii. 18, xviii. 1), while a tamarisk said to have been planted by Abraham in Beersheba (Gen. xxi. 33) probably represents a later traditional interpretation of an ancient sacred grove. If Deborah, the prophetess, sitting under a palm tree, associated according to one tradition with the grave of Rachel (Judges iv. 5, vi. 11 ; Gen. xxxv. 8), is an imaginary figure arising from a confusion of the hero of the tribe of Issachar with the "nurse of Rachel," the reference bears witness to oracular functions being connected with sacred trees. The coronation of Abimelech at "the oak of the pillar" in Shechem (Judges ix. 6), and the revelation to Moses at the "burning bush" (Exod. iii. 2–5), are further indications of a Hebrew tree cultus.

The numerous allusions to sacred springs and wells show that water was regarded by the ancestors of Israel as having magico-religious properties in much the same way as the Egyptians associated the Nile with Osiris and the Babylonians identified the Euphrates with Ea and Tammuz. Any spring issuing spontaneously from the earth tended to acquire a sacred significance, as, for example, En-mishpat (the spring of judgement) at Kadesh (Gen. xiv. 7), which seems to have been resorted to for purposes of divination like the oracle terebinth. The sanctuary at Beersheba,

fully equipped with wells and a tamarisk, attracted large numbers of devotees even in the days of Amos (Amos v. 5, viii. 14; cf. Gen. xxi. 22 f.). *Beer-la-hai-roi* ("the well of the living one that seeth me"), near Kadesh (Gen. xvi. 7, 14, xxiv. 62, xxv. 11), was sacred at first to El-roi, a god of seeing (*i.e.* oracle), but when it became incorporated in the worship of Israel the name was changed to *Beer-la-hai-roi*, possibly because it was then believed that no man could see God and live (Gen. xxxii. 30).[1]

The Semitic notion of the subterranean cosmic waters may have fostered the belief in the sacredness of springs and wells, and given a significance to the cult when purely animistic ideas had ceased to predominate. Thus, according to extra-biblical Jewish tradition, David reached the floods of the cosmic deep in digging the foundations of the temple. They surged up and threatened to destroy the world, whereupon he recited the seventeen Songs of Degrees and wrote the Name of God on a stone with which he closed the mouth of the abyss. This would seem to be an adaptation of Babylonian mythology, but the belief in a watery deep, or *tehôm*, corresponding to the Babylonian Tiamat, is prominent in the Priestly creation story (Gen. i. 2).

Again, since it was the waters that brought forth life abundantly (Gen. i. 20), it is not surprising that vitalizing properties were assigned to "living water" (*i.e.* running water) efficacious in curing leprosy (Lev. xiv. 5, 50), as well as in removing ceremonial defilement. In the spiritual sphere, ablutions became a part of the consecration ceremony in the initiation

[1] Cf. Oesterley and Robinson, *Hebrew Religion*, p. 37.

of priests and the sanctification of the congregation of Israel (Exod. xix. 10, xxix. 4, xxx. 18; Lev. xiii.–xiv., xvii. 16; Num. xxxi. 21–24), and it survived in the form of proselyte baptism well into the Christian era.[1]

Passing from sacred things and places to the spiritual beings animating them, there can be little doubt that the nomad Hebrews, like their Semitic kinsmen, had an elaborate demonology of jinn, afrit, and ghul, however carefully a veil has been drawn over this aspect of their cult in the Old Testament. The ancient Arabs we know thought that the desert was peopled with corporeal beings who sometimes assumed animal forms as ostriches and snakes, or took up their abode in beasts of prey. They might appear also in hybrid forms, or as human beings, capable of appearing and disappearing at will, and sending disease and madness. Always they were objects of fear, and generally they made their abode in cemeteries and deserted or unhealthy localities. If disturbed, as, for instance, when fresh ground was broken, a new house erected, or new trees were cut down, they were liable to become malicious. It was thought prudent, therefore, to perform rites on these occasions to placate the demons and secure the protection of the beneficent powers.

Although there is scarcely any trace of this cult in the pre-exilic literature of Israel, yet, despite the strenuous efforts of the monotheists to bring all spiritual beings under the control of Yahweh, the

[1] The importance of the *tebilah* being of "living water" in contradistinction to "artificial" (*i.e.* drawn) water is stressed in the *Mishnah*.

earlier beliefs may be detected in such a phrase as "the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil Spirit from the Lord troubled him" (1 Sam. xvi. 14). Or, again, in the case of the false prophets sent to deceive Ahab, "the Lord who put a lying spirit in their mouths" (1 Kings xxii. 23). The seraphim, or "burning ones," represented by the pre-exilic Isaiah as the attendants of Yahweh (Isa. vi. 1–7), began their career as the dreaded fiery serpent (seraph) (Num. xxi. 6; Deut. viii. 15) of Semitic cult, just as the satyrs (Isa. xiii. 21 f.), the golden calf (Exod. xxxii. 4 ff.; Lev. xvii. 7; Deut. ix. 21), and the scape-goat, or *azazel* (Lev. xvi. 8–10), probably originated in the hairy jinn in the form of a calf, or *se'irim*, who haunted waste places, and were worshipped among the Assyrians and Phœnicians. The *lilith* of Isa. xxxiv. 11–15 was a well-known Assyrian night-demon, to which probably reference is made in the Compline Psalm: "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day" (Ps. xci. 5). A whole assortment of Semitic demons occur in the desolation of Babylon—"wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And wild beasts of the island shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces" (Isa. xiii. 21 f.).

The souls of the dead were also accredited with supernatural powers which found expression in rites of a protective nature, as, for example, the closing of the eyes of a corpse to prevent the spirit from wandering, and the veiling of the face and covering of the head of the mourners as a barrier against

contact with the soul of the deceased. The rending of the garments and putting on of sackcloth were probably to prevent contagion through the clothes becoming infected with the soul-substance, while the placing of ashes on the head was to render the survivors unrecognizable. Behind all these ceremonies the fear of the dead can be discerned.

On the other hand, the superior knowledge possessed by the departed led in Israel as in Babylonia to necromancy. Thus, in the days of the monarchy Saul resorted to the witch of Endor to learn his fate in the approaching battle from the shade of Samuel (1 Sam. xxviii. 3–25), and the reference to his having put away those who had familiar spirits is probably a later insertion when the practice was under condemnation. In any case, it is clear from Isa. viii. 19, xxix. 4, xix. 3, that the custom was firmly established in the days immediately preceding the Exile.

It was in all probability in order to stop this traffic with the dead that the prophets of the eighth century emphasized the negative character of the hereafter in Sheol. If, as they maintained, the dead were living in an inactive, silent, semi-conscious state in the dreary prison-like underworld, it was useless to seek their aid in the conduct of human affairs on earth. This, however, was certainly not the belief of the nomad Hebrews, who, like the rest of their stock, regarded life beyond the grave as a continuation of the present state of existence with the same family divisions and social distinctions. Sheol, in fact, seems to have been originally the abode of the Semitic deities,[1] and it

[1] G. Beer, *Der biblische Hades* (Holtzmann-Festschrift, Tübingen-Leipzig, 1902), pp. 7, 19.

was only under the influence of the Hebrew monotheists that the jurisdiction of Yahweh was limited to this world. It was they who maintained that "in death there is no remembrance of thee (Yahweh); in Sheol who shall give thee thanks?" (Ps. vi. 5). But the relationship of Israel to its God was too intimate and enduring to be terminated by death, and in later Judaism, when the fear of necromancy was less acute after the Exile, this negative attitude was abandoned. At least, from the second century B.C. and onwards devout Jews became convinced that beyond the grave they would be guided and upheld by Yahweh, and eventually received by Him in glory (Ps. lxxiii. 24).

In arriving at this belief, they were only returning to the faith of their fathers in a more refined form, since the early Hebrews shared with the rest of the Semites, and indeed of mankind as a whole, the hope of personal survival in an active and conscious afterlife as *elohim*. Only on this assumption can the ancient funerary customs be explained, and if the illustrious inhabitants of Sheol were *Rephaim* (weak ones), lacking the celestial glory of the Egyptian departed, they were not devoid of consciousness, as the Yahwists sometimes suggested (cf. Isa. xiv. 9 ff.; Ezek. xxxii. 27; 1 Kings xvii. 21 f.; Ps. xxx. 4, xvi. 10). Indeed in denouncing the current necromancy the prophet Isaiah bears witness to the prevailing belief of his day when he places in the mouth of his opponents the words, "should not a people seek unto their *elohim*, unto the dead on behalf of the living?" (Isa. viii. 19).

Closely associated with the cult of the dead is the practice of ancestor-worship. Here, again, the

importance attached by the Hebrews to their being gathered to their fathers in death, the provision for offerings made at the graves of heroes (cf. menhirs erected at the tomb, Gen. xxxv. 8, 14), the sacrificial clan feast (1 Sam. xx. 29), and the elaborate mourning for the illustrious dead (Gen. l. 10), are all suggestive of something approaching worship having been offered to the ancestors of Israel. The same interpretation might be placed on the intense desire for male descendants to perpetuate the family name, while the veneration of "mothers in Israel" may possibly point to the existence of an earlier matriarchal line (cf. Gen. ii. 24; Hos. i. 4, 6, 9), matrilocal marriage [1] being by no means uncommon among desert people.[2] As in China, where ancestor-worship is fundamental, the family and the tribe are integral in Hebrew social organization.

From this rapid survey of the Old Testament evidence in the light of early Semitic belief and custom, it may be concluded that the nomad Hebrews shared the current ideas of their Aramæan kinsmen. Like the rest of their stock they regarded themselves as surrounded with beneficent and malevolent powers capable of taking up their abode in natural objects, and assuming various forms. Hence the cult of stones, trees, springs, wells, and demons. They revealed the same fundamental attitude to the dead; a mingled fear and reverence which found expression

[1] *I.e.* the wife living in her own clan (or tent) where she entertained her husband at intervals as a "visitor."

[2] V. Scheil, *Récueil de lois assyriennes* (Paris, 1921), pp. 26 f., 33 f., 37. Wellhausen, *Die Ehe bei den Arabern*, 1883, p. 445. Cf. Gen. xxiv. 67, 28, xxxi. 33.

in protective rites and a necromantic traffic with the spirits in the underworld. Further, they seem to have regarded the shades as *elohim*, an expression which is also employed to denote deity. That the *elohim* were originally spiritual beings like the cherubim (Gen. iii. 24) is indicated by Jacob's vision at Bethel since he saw them ascending and descending the ladder, and subsequently he was led to anoint the sacred stone as the abode of *el*. But in the narratives of the Southern kingdom (Judah), Yahweh is made the Lord of the *elohim* in the pre-Mosaic age, in contrast to those of the Northern province which carefully refrain from the use of the term (Yahweh) till after the sacred name has been revealed to Moses. Here we are faced with the problem of a pre-Mosaic monotheism which must be reserved for discussion in some detail in the next lecture.

Chapter VI

MOSES AND YAHWEH

From the evidence produced in the last lecture it is clear that an animistic polydemonism constituted the background of the religion of the nomad Hebrews. In the Old Testament narratives this cultus is given a definitely monotheistic form by the bringing of various localized manifestations of supernatural beings into relation with the supreme Deity, under the title of either Elohim or Yahweh. This may be explained as a gloss of later writers anxious to maintain that from the beginning Israel worshipped the one true God. And so long as an evolutionary development of religion held the field this was the only reasonable interpretation of the situation. In the light of recent anthropological research, however, it is not so certain that this hypothesis is correct. To make the position clear it is necessary to survey very briefly the change in outlook that has occurred since the spirit of historical enquiry began to pervade the study of religion in the latter part of the last century.

In 1872 Edward Tylor produced a considerable mass of material which seemed to indicate that the human mind becomes conscious of a "second self" independent of the physical body through the phenomena of sleep, trance, and death.[1] Dreams, it was contended, suggested the idea of a separable soul

[1] *Primitive Culture* (London, 1891), 3rd Ed., Vol. I, pp. 424 f.

capable of visiting places, seeing persons, and performing actions, on its own initiative during life. Prolonged absence, however, has its dangers, for if the individual is deprived of its vital principle for any length of time death is the inevitable consequence. From this belief the notion of continued existence beyond the grave is supposed to have arisen, together with the theory of reincarnation and transmigration of souls. Moreover, the principle was extended to the whole animate creation so that animals and plants were thought to have an indwelling soul like human beings.

From this belief in spiritual beings animating the whole of nature, which for Tylor constituted the minimum definition of religion, polytheism developed by the limitation of the number of the indwelling spirits to a pantheon of deities believed to control the various departments. In place of a separate spirit for every individual tree, a god of the woods in general was conceived, a Silvanus or what not; instead of personifying all the winds as gods, a single Æolus was postulated, who kept them shut up in a bag to be let lose at pleasure to lash the sea to fury. By the same process of abstraction and generalization, the same desire for simplification and unification, by which polytheism evolved from animism, the many gods were deposed in favour of one god, and polytheism passed into monotheism.[1]

This hypothesis is very simply stated, but on further examination in the light of the evidence that has accumulated since it was first formulated, it is by no means so convincing. Apart from the fact that

[1] Frazer, *Worship of Nature* (London, 1926), p. 10.

animism is not the most fundamental reaction to the supernatural, inasmuch as it presupposes a conception of personality absent in the most rudimentary states of culture and mentality, the establishment beyond reasonable doubt of so-called " High Gods " among low races has entirely upset this evolutionary scheme.

It was Andrew Lang who in 1898 first called attention to the significance of a widespread belief among very primitive people, such as the native tribes of South-east Australia, in remote, ethical, beneficent Supreme Beings who had never been men, and were often thought to have existed before death came into the world. These shadowy All-Fathers have been obscured by the more intimate spirits, totems, and deified ancestors, but, nevertheless, they are now known to exist in the background of almost every primitive community.[1] The belief is certainly no more the triumph of the unifying principle over the disruptive, of abstract over concrete thought, than it is a product of philosophical speculation. Rather is it an expression of an emotion, not the elaboration of a certain kind of knowledge about the universe ; a psychological tendency, not a stage in an evolutionary sequence. Hence its recurrence in all states of culture, and in every phase of religious development.

The concept appears to represent the climax of spiritual experience and aspiration, since, although

[1] Cf. A. Lang, *Making of Religion* (London, 1898), pp. 187 ff. Howitt, *Native Tribes of S.E. Australia* (London, 1904), pp. 488 ff. P. Radin, *Monotheism among Primitive People* (London, 1924). W. Schmidt, *Origin and Growth of Religion* (London, 1931), pp. 167 ff. *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee* (Münster, 1926–34), Vols. I–IV.

primitive people usually do not have any very definite relations with the All-Father,[1] they attach to him a value superior to that of other supernatural beings. He stands alone, head and shoulders above such secondary figures as animistic spirits, totems, ghosts of the dead and ancestors. It is, in fact, his superiority that makes him unapproachable and remote till at length he sometimes becomes little more than a name or a bull-roarer.

That this apprehension of the Divine in the highest sense in which the human mind is capable of conceiving it in any given phase of its development arose spontaneously, is suggested by the fact that when man began to speculate about the universe he seems to have found a solution of his reasonings in animism, totemism, and polytheism. Spiritual beings were multiplied, and in due course, as Tylor and Frazer have shown, they became individualised as gods; heroes have been raised to divine rank as ancestral deities; and natural phenomena have been brought into relation with the pantheon, as in the Vedic cult where Varuna was the god of the open sky, Indra the deity of the upper air, and Usha that of the dawn. But so far from polytheism passing into monotheism, the multiplication of departmental deities has tended to obscure the High God till he has degenerated into a bogey to frighten women and children, as among the Arunta in Central Australia, where the thunder-like noise produced by the swinging of the bull-roarer is thought by the uninitiated to be the voice of the High

[1] Fr. Schmidt has now produced evidence of certain ceremonies, prayers, and sacrifices offered to High Gods. Cf. *High Gods in North America* (Oxford, 1933).

God,[1] unless he has become amalgamated with the lesser divinities, as in Ancient Egypt.

This universal monotheistic tendency—if a belief in tribal All-Fathers can rightly be called monotheism—is more fundamental than any final product of an evolutionary system, being an emotional evaluation of what Otto would describe as the "Mysterium tremendum" in the intuitive realization of a Power, awful and mysterious, as the ground of the visible order.[2] Since revelation rightly understood is the coincidence of divinely guided events and minds divinely illuminated to interpret those events, and not the communication of infallible oracles, or particular doctrines and beliefs, it is reasonable to regard this intercourse of mind and event as the self-expression of the Creator. As the Archbishop of York (Dr. Temple) has recently pointed out in his Gifford Lectures at Glasgow, there is no such thing as revealed truth. The truths of revelation are propositions which express the results of correct thinking concerning revelation, and these attain their fullness in the unveiling of a Person to persons. The marks of a true revelation are a union of holiness and power, before which the human spirit bows in awe and wonder, and which authenticates itself by continuous development to some focal point wherein all preparatory revelation finds fulfilment, and from which illumination radiates into every department of life and being.

Now the psychological tendency which has found expression in the concept of an ethical High God

[1] Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes of Central Australia* (London, 1904), p. 338.

[2] *The Idea of the Holy* (Oxford, 1923), pp. 15, 130, 134.

satisfies these conditions. Within a series of "divinely guided events" in Israel, "divinely illuminated minds" were able to "interpret those events" as an "unveiling of a Person to persons" in terms of a revelation of "holiness and power before which the human spirit has bowed in awe and wonder," and which has authenticated itself in a progressive unfolding of the Divine mind and purpose which reaches its climax in a "focal point" wherein all preparatory revelation finds fulfilment. This will become more apparent as we trace the development of ethical monotheism in subsequent lectures. Suffice it to say here that, while the theory of a primeval revelation as an enunciation of particular theological dogmas vouchsafed to the human race as a whole, or to certain isolated individuals or groups, at the threshold of history, is untenable, the available evidence suggests a divine self-disclosure of God's nature and purpose which was certainly not confined to the Hebrew prophets.

If it was not until the eighth century B.C. that the great spiritual leaders of Israel proclaimed an explicit ethical monotheism, they never represented themselves to be originators of a new religion. They were essentially reformers whose mission it was to reclaim the people from the depths to which they had fallen to the pure religion of the desert period (Hos. xi. 1; Amos v. 25; Jer. vii. 21).[1] Yahweh whom they had forsaken was the God of the patriarchs, of Moses, Elijah, and David, and it was He who led their forefathers through the wilderness and established them

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 101 f. The attitude of the pre-exilic prophets to the popular vegetation cults is discussed in greater detail in my *Origin of Sacrifice*, pp. 259 ff.

in the land of their adoption. Thus, a revelation already given is presupposed by the prophets.

If, as the anthropological evidence suggests, a monotheistic tendency is inherent in the psychological approach to the sacred in primitive as well as in higher states of culture, there is no reason to suppose that the Aramæan ancestors of the Hebrews were an exception to the rule. True, Renan was not justified in his assumption that the Semites had a special aptitude for monotheism, since their cult was specifically animistic and polydemonistic. Furthermore, even in Israel, whenever the people were left to themselves they speedily relapsed into this type of religion, as the Old Testament shows only too plainly. But, nevertheless, there has been a recurrence of monotheistic movements in Semitic lands, and Renan is not *wholly* wrong when he emphasizes " the habits of the nomadic life " as making for a monotheistic tendency.[1]

Even in Babylonia in the third millennium B.C.—about the time when Abraham is alleged to have dwelt at Ur of the Chaldees, if this be in Mesopotamia —henotheism, or the recognition of one god as " a great king above all gods," flourished ; Marduk, the personification of the sun and early city of Babylon, having absorbed the attributes of the other gods of the pantheon.[2] Whether this henotheistic movement really influenced the patriarch it is impossible to say in view of the nature of the evidence concerning Abraham's sojourn at Ur Kasdim. Attempts have been made to explain the migration to Haran in

[1] E. Renan, *Histoire du peuple d'Israël* (Paris, 1887), I, pp. 45, 59.

[2] Jastrow, *Religious Belief and Practice in Babylonia and Assyria* (New York, 1911), pp. 100 ff.

terms of a substitution by Hammurabi at Ur of the worship of Shamash (the Sun god) for that of Sin (the Moon god), while the occurrence of two forms of the name Abram—or what may be Abram—on cuneiform tablets of the period has led to further speculation. But the data are too hypothetical to be made the basis of a reasoned theory.

Nevertheless, the Exodus narratives presuppose some knowledge of Yahweh on the part of the Hebrew tribes before Moses declared himself as His spokesman. Thus, at the burning bush he is alleged to have been commanded to " Go, and gather together the elders of Israel, and say unto them, The Lord the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt " (Exod. iii. 16).

A strong case has been made for regarding Yahweh as originally a Midianite deity whom Moses encountered while keeping the flocks of Jethro his father-in-law, the " priest of Midian." According to Judges i. 16, Jethro was a Kenite, and if he was already a worshipper of Yahweh before the Exodus, he would naturally rejoice when he saw all that his god had done in delivering Israel out of the hand of the Egyptians. And so we are told that Jethro said to Moses, " Blessed be Yahweh, who hath delivered you out of the hand of Pharaoh ; who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that Yahweh is greater than all gods ; yea in the thing wherein they dwelt proudly against them " (Exod. xviii. 10–11). Moreover, Moses would naturally hearken unto the voice of his father-in-law, and do all that he said, if Jethro was a follower of Yahweh of long standing and perhaps His priest.

But Yahweh it would seem was not merely a Kenite deity, since it is inconceivable that the Elders of Israel would have listened to the commands of an alien tribal god. Moses, in fact, definitely rested his claims on the revelation that he had received from the God of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore, Yahweh must have had a wider reference among the desert tribes. In support of this conclusion it is significant that the expression *Yau-ilu*, "Yah is God," has been found in the text of a Babylonian letter. The term *Yau*, derived originally from an Amorite deity, was used to designate the supreme God, but only in special cases, as in the tablet identifying Marduk (*ilu*) with all the other gods of the pantheon. The occurrence of similar forms such as *Yami* and even *Yahveh*, suggests that his worship may have extended to Canaan, Syria, and Babylonia,[1] but until more is known of the etymology of the syllables, and their precise significance,[2] it is only safe to conjecture that Yahweh was not entirely an unknown deity among the Aramæans before he was brought into prominence by Moses.

The work of Moses appears to have been that of making the shadowy form of the All-Father of the nomad tribes the central fact in Israel. If he first became acquainted with Yahweh among the Kenites

[1] K. Marti, *Jahwe und seine Auffassung in der ältesten Zeit* (Gotha, 1908), pp. 322 ff. H. Zimmern und H. Winckler, *Die Keilinschriften und das A.T.* (Berlin, 1902), p. 54; 3rd Ed. 66, 262.

[2] Cf. König, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft* (Leipzig, 1915), pp. 45 ff. Driver, *ibid.*, 1928, pp. 8 f. In any case the term "Jehovah" is a blunder of the thirteenth century (A.D.) Hebraists who read the consonants JHWH with the vowels of Adonai (Lord)=JaHoWaH.

under the influence of Jethro, his own spiritual experience at the burning bush (whatever may be the precise psychological interpretation of the episode) fired him with enthusiasm in the cause of the ancient tribal god. It was in the strength of this conviction that he was able to develop the national consciousness of the Hebrews, and to establish a theocracy. It was not denied that other nations had their own tribal deities, but for Israel Yahweh was alone Supreme, jealous and all-powerful, able to protect His people, and make them to prosper so long as they were faithful, but equally to punish them when they fell from grace.

Attempts have been made in the past to dissolve the figure of Moses into a mythical hero, but these have now been abandoned by all serious scholars.[1] However much some of his actions may have been embellished in later years, he occupies too prominent a position in the national history of his nation to justify any attempt to dismiss him merely as a fictitious character. As Sir James Frazer says, "there seems to be no sufficient reason to doubt that in these broad outlines the tradition concerning him is correct"[2]; and we may regard him as the first commanding figure in Israel as a nation, just as Sinai is the unifying centre of national life.

In the prevailing confusion described in the poem of Deborah's victory over Sisera—the earliest piece of Hebrew literature (Judges v.)—an appeal is made to the national consciousness centred in the God of Seir who had done marvellous things in the brave

[1] Winckler and Cheyne were the last scholars of repute to adopt this view.

[2] *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, Vol. II, p. 437.

days of old. When Yahweh proceeded from His mountain home, and marched out of the field of Edom, " the earth trembled and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water. The mountain quaked at the presence of Yahweh, even yon Sinai at the presence of Yahweh, the God of Sinai " (v. 4).

The biblical references to Sinai agree that the covenant was given under the awe-inspiring phenomena of thunder, lightning, and storm (Exod. xix. 16 ff.), but the precise situation of the holy mountain is obscure. The identification of Sinai with Djebel Musa (the mountain of Moses) in the peninsula to the north of the Red Sea, still favoured by some scholars,[1] or with Djebal-Serbal, to the north-west of this range, geographically accords with the E and P narratives, but J locates it in Midianite territory apparently in the neighbourhood of the burning bush.

Seir is the range southwards from the Dead Sea towards the Gulf of Akaba, and Edom is the surrounding country. There are good reasons for thinking that the holy mountain was a volcano, since all the circumstances of the tradition point to the revelation having been given during an eruption. " The mount Sinai was altogether on smoke, because Yahweh descended upon it in fire : and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly " (Exod. xix. 18). Or, again, in Deut. iv. 11 f., it is said, " And ye came near and stood under the mountain ; and the mountain burned with fire unto the heart of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness. And Yahweh

[1] Maurice Vernes, *Sinai contre Kades* (École prat. des Hautes Études, sciences religieuses), Paris, 1915.

spake unto you out of the midst of the fire : ye heard the voice of words, but ye saw no form : only ye heard a voice." So the Psalmist (Ps. lxviii. 7, 8) : "The earth trembled, the heavens also dropped at the presence of Yahweh ; even Sinai trembled at the presence of Yahweh, the God of Israel."

There are few phenomena more awe-inspiring than a thunderstorm in the presence of an active volcano, as I happen to know from personal experience. We can well imagine how deep would be the impression made on a religiously-minded person like Moses, and on the desert tribes, if an eruption was encountered accompanied by an earthquake as they fled before the Egyptians. Dr. Oesterley, following Gressmann, has reconstructed the passage across the so-called "Red Sea" along these lines. The "Red Sea," he thinks, is a misnomer for Reed Sea, or possibly the Sea of Weeds (*Yam-Suph*), which, according to 1 Kings ix. 26, was in the land of Edom, at the northern extremity of the Gulf of Akaba—a long, narrow arm 125 miles north of the Red Sea. On this hypothesis, the Red Sea is eliminated from the Exodus narrative, and the incident placed in a volcanic district. It then becomes possible to conjecture that above the lurid light of the darkening landscape an immense cloud covered the mountain-top glowing with incandescent gases in awe-inspiring majesty. "Then occurs one of those terrible cataclysms which have happened again and again in the case of volcanoes situated near the coast ; the sea bottom is raised over a large area by the underlying explosion of pent-up gases, and the land appears where a few moments before there was but the dark surface of water. The Hebrews seize

their opportunity, and with one accord make for the newly appeared land ; over this they speed and gain the farther side of what had been the sea. But on looking back they perceive that the pursuing enemy has followed their example, and is likewise passing over the land in their wake. But once more there occurs what also has happened time and again since : the sea bottom, which had been forced upwards, being unable to bear its own weight when the underlying pressure is withdrawn by the gradual dispersal of the gaseous vapours underground, collapses ! The waters which had receded now return with an incredible roar and overwhelm the whole of the pursuing Egyptians." [1]

Plausible as is this suggestion, there are difficulties in its acceptance. It is true, as is shown, that cataclysms of this character and magnitude are by no means unknown during violent seismic disturbances. For example, in the terrific eruption of Mont Pelé on the island of Martinique in 1902, simultaneously with the belching forth of an incandescent cloud from the mountain, there was a fearful gale and an earthquake which caused the sea to rise higher and higher till immense waves swept over the island, and then receded. But, making due allowance for argument from negative evidence, it is surprising, to say the least, that no mention occurs in the Egyptian records of a catastrophe of these dimensions. It may be, of

[1] Oesterley and Robinson, *Hebrew Religion* (London, 1930), p. 109. This volcanic hypothesis has been further developed by Canon Phythian-Adams, who finds a rational explanation of all the " miracles " of the Exodus in seismic activity in the Rift Valley of Jordan and southward to the Red Sea. Cf. *The Call of Israel* (Oxford, 1934), pp. 137 ff.

course, that actually only a handful of men and chariots was involved, and there is no actual mention of Pharaoh himself having been a victim of the miracle, but it might be expected that so unusual an occurrence would have been recorded in the contemporary monuments. Moreover, the biblical narrative, unlike the account of Sinai, gives no indication that a volcanic eruption was associated with the passage through the waters, and Sinai is represented as situated some distance from the "Red Sea." After making the passage they went three days' journey into the wilderness to Meribah (Exod. xvii. 1–7), which is probably Kadesh (Num. xx. 1, 13, 24), where a halt was made before the holy mountain was reached. Whether this was located in Seir cannot be definitely decided from the data at our disposal, since, if this very probable suggestion is adopted, it has yet to be explained why the site should have been forgotten and placed at a considerable distance from Palestine when actually it was in adjoining territory.[1] But the circumstances point to a volcanic home as the original abode of Yahweh.

Thus, not only do the references to the law admit of no other interpretation, but Elijah is said to have resorted to the same sanctuary under the name of Horeb, where he stood upon the mount before Yahweh. "And behold Yahweh passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before Yahweh; but Yahweh was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but Yahweh was not in the earthquake: and after the

[1] Phythian-Adams argues that the name "Sinai" is a post-exilic interpolation first connected with the Mount of God (Horeb) by the Priestly writer. *The Call of Israel*, pp. 131 ff.

earthquake a fire : but Yahweh was not in the fire : and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out and stood in the entering in of the cave" (1 Kings xix. 11 ff.), just as Moses hid himself in a cleft of the rock while Yahweh made His glory to pass by (Exod. xxxiii. 22 f.).

Taken collectively these descriptions of Sinai contain all the adjuncts of an ancient holy mountain fully equipped with a sacred cave, and the awe-inspiring phenomena of volcanic eruptions. It was in this setting that the covenant between Israel and its god was established, and the desert tribes were consolidated into a single nation under the leadership of Moses. What the terms of this covenant were it is impossible to say. It is most unlikely that Moses was himself the author of any part of the Hexateuch traditionally ascribed to him, though certain portions, such as the *Book of the Covenant* embedded in Exodus (xx. 22–xxiii. 33 ; cf. xxiv. 7), which seems to be of great antiquity, may contain injunctions for which he was ultimately responsible. This document constitutes the oldest collection of Hebrew laws, but while they bear some resemblance to the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, it is improbable that Sellin is correct in ascribing the authorship to Moses, inasmuch as the legislature, like that of the Decalogue, suggests a settled agricultural state of society rather than the conditions of a nomadic desert people. The circumstances point to the period between the Conquest of Palestine and the establishment of the monarchy.

All these laws presuppose oxen ploughing in the fields, cities with gates, houses as fixed abodes, with an

equipment of servants and a stream of visitors, reflecting the life of Israel in the seventh century B.C., when the nation had adopted the agricultural civilization of Palestine. Moreover, the religious prohibitions of the Decalogue belong to this period rather than to that of the desert, when image-worship was a serious menace and the Sabbath was coming into being as a weekly observance. Thus, it is quite certain that the last-mentioned institution does not go back to the time of Moses. The earliest passages in which a periodically recurring Sabbath occur belong to the very end of the pre-exilic period (Deut. v. 13 f.; Lev. xxiii. 3; Ezek. xlvi. 1), but it was not until after the Exile that it was given the significance attached to it in the Decalogue. Therefore, in its present form it would seem to be a late insertion in E and D, reflecting for the most part the prophetic outlook of the seventh century, but in the matter of the Sabbath a post-exilic priestly régime.

Nevertheless, if a Mosaic authorship of the Law cannot be maintained, few competent authorities would now deny that the foundations of the worship of Yahweh were laid by Moses in the wilderness. The principal documents agree in making him the great prophet, teacher, legislator, and advocate of Israel, who consolidated the nation in a covenant relationship with its God, and who was the source of the lofty moral inspiration which found its climax and consummation in the teaching and commandments of the prophets and priests of later days. If this is correct, it was the seeds sown in the desert, and notably at Sinai, that in the fullness of time produced the rich harvest which constitutes the unique glory of the religion of Israel.

Chapter VII

THE RELIGION OF ISRAEL BEFORE THE EXILE

If the welding of the tribes into a theocratic nation was accomplished by Moses in the desert, the fundamental problem that confronted the leaders of Israel in the period of the settlement was the establishment of " Mosaism " in Palestine. Yahweh was essentially the God of Sinai, and, wherever the holy mountain may be placed, it was certainly not in the Promised Land. Herein lay the crux of the situation. As we have seen, tribal monotheism, so far from denying the existence of other gods, maintained that each group of people had its own All-Father somewhere in the background exercising territorial rule, very much as among the Australian tribes Daramulun is the High God of the Yuin, Baiame of the Kamilaroi, the Euahlayi and other tribes, and Bunjil of the Kurnai.[1] Thus, in the Old Testament, Chemosh is represented as the supreme deity among the Moabites, Asshur among the Assyrians, and Milcom among the children of Ammon.

But this is not all. A change of locality meant a change of religious allegiance, as in the case of Ruth, the Moabitess, who, when she decided to throw in her lot with Naomi, her mother-in-law, proclaimed,

[1] Cf. Howitt, *Native Tribes of S.E. Australia* (London, 1904), pp. 488 ff.

" thy people shall be my people, and thy god my god " (Ruth i. 16). Similarly, the threat of exile to David meant that he would have to serve other gods (1 Sam. xxvi. 19 f.) : " For they have driven me out this day that I should not cleave unto the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go, serve other gods." Or Naaman, who in his anxiety to worship Yahweh, took two loads of Palestinian soil to his Syrian home (2 Kings v. 17).

Therefore, when the Hebrews settled in Canaan it would be in accordance with the accepted custom of the age for them to conform to the religious allegiances of the land in which they found themselves. In Palestine a highly developed polytheistic vegetation cultus prevailed, centring in the worship of the " high places." The book of Judges records the struggle between two religious factions. To the west of Jordan a settled agricultural community continued more or less the traditional Palestinian worship of the vegetation deities, or *Ba'als*, at the ancient sanctuaries, while in the east and south the monotheistic faith of the Yahweh worshippers of the desert was in the ascendancy. But, as was made clear in a previous lecture, the conquest of the land by the Hebrew tribes was carried out in isolated detachments, and even in the early days of the monarchy, it was only the open country in the mountainous districts that was occupied by Israel, *i.e.* on the highlands of the Transjordanian plateaux and in the hill-country of Galilee, Ephraim, and Judah. Between these settlements were lines of Canaanite fortresses in the valley of Jezreel, and from Gezer to Jerusalem, separating the camps of the invaders.

Therefore, throughout the whole of the period of the Judges the struggle for the mastery continued.

In the course of this gradual conquest a process of cultural assimilation was going on, with the result that the final product was a fusion of Hebrews and Canaanites. This had its inevitable effects on the religious thought and practice of the nation. Small sections of the Hebrews, it is true, maintained their desert ideals to the end, as in the case of the Rechabites and Nazarites, who bound themselves to observe strictly the customs of the nomadic life. The Nazarites appear to have dedicated themselves to Yahweh in a special manner, and their aversion to wine, like that of the later Rechabites, was doubtless because of its "vegetation" association in the worship of the baals,[1] whatever may have been the origin of the tabu. Jonadab, the son of Rechab, the Kenite, continued the nomad tradition in his clan in the ninth century B.C. (2 Kings x. 15 f.; Jer. xxxv. 6–10), and the pastoral element in Judah seems to have enabled the southern province to remain less contaminated by the indigenous cults than the more agricultural Israelites in the northern kingdom.[2]

To an agricultural population it was of the first importance that its god should be essentially a vegetation deity, and if an immigrant nomadic people retained their original tribal All-Father in a new environment where the cultivation of the soil was the

[1] The tabu concerning the cutting of the hair probably related to hair being a vehicle of soul-substance. To cut it meant a loss of spiritual power, as in the case of Samson.

[2] G. Hoelscher, *Die Profeten, Untersuchung zur Religionsgeschichte Israels* (Leipzig, 1914), p. 163.

principal means of subsistence, the tendency would be for him to become remote and of little practical importance. Under these circumstances how was the mountain-god of Sinai to retain the allegiance of Israel in its new home in competition with the local baals who were not only the divinities of the land but especially concerned with the processes of vegetation? In reading the Old Testament to-day we place the narratives almost imperceptibly against our own monotheistic background, but the early Hebrews had no such knowledge. If, as seems probable, they were monotheists, it was only in the tribal sense of recognizing a High God as supreme in Israel by reason of the revelation vouchsafed to Moses. But when the wanderings were over Sinai was as remote in place as its God was in function. Therefore, nothing short of a miracle was required to keep Him from being totally eclipsed by the local divinities and their cultus. It was this miraculous accomplishment on the part of the monoYahwists that gives Israel its unique position in the history of religion. The phenomenal victory, however, was not won without a struggle extending over a protracted period.

The fact that throughout these years of conflict the God of Sinai retained His position as the deity *par excellence* in Palestine, however much He may have been equated with the local *ba'alim*, shows how deep was the impression made upon the nation by Moses, and what far-reaching effects the revelation in the desert had upon the tribes. Only a very real spiritual experience could have produced this permanent allegiance when all the circumstances were calculated to mitigate against it. Yahweh may have

been enthroned at the shrines vacated by the former tenants (*elim* and *ba'alim*), very much as in later ages the Christian Church re-dedicated the sanctuaries of the Mother-Goddess to the Mother of God, and transformed Dionysus into St. Dionysius. But throughout He remained the God of Israel, and if syncretism has its ethical difficulties when the attributes of a former divinity are transferred to his successor, it is at least capable of keeping alive a higher as well as a lower tradition, and so of making possible a reformation when the time is ripe.

The usurpation of the place of the ancient deities by Yahweh seems to have begun by His appropriation of the local shrines. If the ancestors of Israel had already made Him Lord of the *Elohim* in the pre-Mosaic period, He already had associations with such places as Bethel, Mamre, Hebron, and Peniel, but probably only in a remote and animistic sense. Such connexions, however, if they existed, must have complicated the situation for the monoYahwists, and indeed, as has been shown, the Old Testament records are not consistent upon this point. It was legitimate for Jacob to anoint the stone at Bethel, but idolatrous for the later Israelites to have any dealings with *mazzeboth*.[1] Nevertheless, the syncretistic movement went on despite all efforts to suppress it, till at length a crisis was reached.

The stirring story of the triumph of Elijah at Carmel may be in the nature of a romantic drama rather than a sober record of historical fact, but it unquestionably sets forth a true picture of the struggle between the monotheistic minority and the

[1] Cf. pp. 66 ff.

polytheistic nation. That Ahab and Jezebel were not really opponents of the worship of Yahweh is suggested by the names of their children—*Jo*ran, Ahazi*ahu*, and Athali*ah*—all of which are compounded with the national Deity (Yahweh). Moreover, they could not have slain all the prophets of Yahweh since four hundred are said to have remained who had not bowed the knee to Baal, and before the fatal battle at Ramoth-Gilead they gathered round the king (1 Kings xxii. 6).

The real conflict between Ahab and Elijah appears to have been about the erection of a temple for the Tyrian Ba'al, Melkart, in Samaria, for Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre and priest of Astarte. In instituting such a temple, or of that of Athaliah at Jerusalem, Ahab was merely repeating what Solomon had done before him when he provided his foreign wives with sanctuaries for their own gods. " Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, in the mount that is before Jerusalem, and for Moloch, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And so did he for all his strange wives which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods " (1 Kings xi. 7 f.). This, of course, was perfectly legitimate on the supposition that each country had its own tribal deity, and if Israel remained faithful to Yahweh on taking up its abode in Palestine, there was no reason why other foreigners, if they wished, should not continue their allegiance to their own gods in a strange land. But in the case of both Solomon and Ahab it appears that they did not stop at erecting temples in honour of strange deities. For as " Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians,

and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites " (1 Kings xi. 5), so Ahab " served Baal a little " (2 Kings x. 18). Therefore, the rights of Yahweh were violated in the land of His adoption.

Since, as we have seen in a former lecture,[1] the processes of vegetation were generally considered to be under the control of the king in a primitive monarchy, who was himself in a special relationship with the divine powers, a destructive drought would afford an excellent opportunity to precipitate a crisis, especially when a country was divided in its religious allegiances. It would seem that the adherents of Yahweh in the time of Ahab seized the occasion of a prolonged absence of rain to exterminate the growing worship of the foreign Ba'al in Israel. To this end Elijah confronted Ahab with troubling the nation in that he had forsaken the commandments of Yahweh and followed the Baalim (1 Kings xviii. 17 ff.). The king, realizing the gravity of the situation, gathered the people together on Mount Carmel at the prophet's behest, and assembled the priests of Baal and the prophets of the Asherah. Thereupon, the spokesman of Yahweh exclaimed : " How long will ye halt between two opinions ? If Yahweh be God, follow Him : but if Baal, then follow him." The great trial scene ensued, and whatever may have been the precise nature of the contest, it can hardly be doubted that the narrative contains a historic kernel in a struggle between two opposing forces, the outcome of which is summed up in the words of Elijah. " Let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant " (1 Kings xviii. 36). Henceforth

[1] Cf. pp. 53 ff.

in Israel, it was demonstrated, there can be but one legitimate cultus, and that offered to Yahweh Who had become the God of the land, and Who had vindicated Himself beyond any possibility of doubt.

The struggle, however, did not end here. Whatever may lie behind the Carmel narrative, the reformation can only have been partially successful, since it was succeeded by the more drastic methods employed by Jehu to exterminate the cult of Melkart (2 Kings x. 22 ff.). The institution of the monarchy certainly did not solve the religious problem, however much it may have organized and consolidated the Hebrew tribes in the face of Philistine inroads. The supremacy of Yahweh may never have been questioned after the destruction of the House of Omri and the devotees of Melkart, but syncretistic religion continued at the local shrines where Yahweh was substituted for Baal, while the kingship retained many of the features of the divine institution in the ancient civilizations.

Thus, Samuel is represented as having taken a vial of oil, and poured it upon the head of Saul and said, " Is it not because Yahweh hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance ? " (1 Sam. x. 1). He then directed him to proceed on his way till he met a company of prophets when, in the words of Samuel, " The Spirit of Yahweh will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophecy with them, and shalt be turned into another man." That is to say, Saul owed his kingship to the usual bestowal of the divine spirit, or nature, through unction which gave him a new personality—" thou shalt be turned into another man "—just as after the anointing of David the

Divine Spirit left Saul and descended upon the new king (1 Sam. xvi. 13 f. ; cf. x. 6).

In another version of the origin of the monarchy, Saul was proclaimed king after his signal victory over the Philistines at Michmash (1 Sam. xiv. 47), but there is clearly a break in the narrative at the words, " Therefore when Saul had taken the kingdom," and it may be that the missing passage had some reference to the part played by Samuel in his anointing, since the story of the asses belongs to the same version. In a third account his accession took place at the ancient Benjamite stone circle at Gilgal, near Jericho, before his campaign against the Philistines (xi. 14). But here, again, it was Samuel who acted as consecrator, and after the battle of Michmash Saul built his first altar to Yahweh.

There is, however, a suggestion in the Old Testament that the monarchy was an affront to Yahweh, who in the person of the prophet Samuel grudgingly permitted the new departure from the ancient theocracy, but not before He had revealed the consequences to be expected from the sinful request. " And Yahweh said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all they say unto thee : for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them " (1 Sam. viii. 7). This school regarded the kingship as a source of the syncretistic movement, being responsible for the introduction of foreign alliances and extraneous cults. Therefore, Hosea (about 760–722 B.C.) proclaimed in the eighth century, " O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah " (x. 9). " I have given thee a king in mine anger and have taken him away in my wrath "

(xiii. 11). The nation, in fact, according to this hypothesis, will not be free from pollution till it returns to the original state, and once again Yahweh reigns supreme without a royal human representative. "I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? And thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes?" (xiii. 10).

Through the influence of this section of the community the divine kingship has become obscured in the Old Testament. Traces remain in the solemn installation, revealing that the kings of Israel were actually regarded as sacred persons appointed as the human representative of Yahweh very much as the reigning Pharaoh in Egypt was the embodiment of Re. Indeed it was probably this divine character assumed by Hebrew monarchs that raised the opposition of the prophets, and possibly led the anti-monarchist school to transfer some of the incidents in the traditional history of Saul to Samuel. Thus, there are reasons for thinking that the account of the birth and childhood of Samuel was originally told of Saul, since Hannah's explanation of her choice of a name for her son is etymologically meaningless as applied to Samuel, but wholly consistent if it refers to Saul: "Because I have asked him of the Lord" (1 Sam. i. 20); *sha'ul* meaning "asked." Moreover, Saul began his reign by building an altar to Yahweh without the least indication of opposition, as the most natural thing for him to do. Further, David is described as wearing an ephod like Samuel at the coming of the ark to Zion, while Solomon "three times a year burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar which he built unto Yahweh, and he burnt incense upon the

altar that was before Yahweh" (1 Kings ix. 25). On the 15th day of the eighth month Jeroboam sacrificed upon the altar that he built at Bethel (1 Kings xii. 33), and Ahaz approached the altar at Damascus and offered thereon burnt offerings, meat offerings, and drink offerings, and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings upon it (2 Kings xvi. 12 f.).

Even in the early days of the settlement in Palestine the local rulers in the book of Judges are represented as viceroys of Yahweh raised up to keep the people from adopting the agricultural cults associated with the ancient shrines. Thus it was when "the Spirit of the Lord" came upon Othniel that he judged Israel (iii. 10), and the same is said of Jephthah (xi. 29) and Samson (xiii. 25). Israel, it was supposed, held Palestine in fief from its god who alone was the divine king and supreme ruler. Therefore, to worship any other deity was treason against the reigning Sovereign, and this brought prompt and proper punishment at the hands of the oppressor, till a representative was sent to deliver the land after the people had repented of their lapse. However artificial this interpretation of the actual historical situation may be, it is the position visualized by the later compilers of the narrative (cf. Judges ii. 11–21). The story of Othniel, for example (iii. 7–11), may be a romance, but, like the other "judges," he is depicted as a divine ruler raised up by Yahweh to deliver and govern His people after they had fallen away to the indigenous cults, and brought upon themselves punishment at the hand of an oppressor.

In this theocratic system, therefore, the divine kingship can be detected in a modified form. The

local rulers were charismatic agents, or vicars, of the Deity, rather than His actual embodiments, but, nevertheless, they were endowed with supernatural powers which extended even to the symbols of their office, as in the case both of Moses and Joshua, who secured victory over their enemies by stretching out their staves (Exod. xvii. 9–13 ; Jos. viii. 18–26). In Jotham's parable of the trees going forth to anoint a king over them, the royal sacring by unction is taken for granted (Judges ix. 8), while in the fullest account of a coronation ceremony in the Old Testament, a covenant is represented as having been made between Yahweh and Jehoiada after the king (Jehoiada) had been duly anointed, crowned, and acclaimed (2 Kings xi. 12 ff.). So potent, in fact, was the power bestowed by the royal unction that the occupant of the throne seems to have been thought to have control over the weather, inasmuch as the hungry cursed the king in famine and siege (Isa. viii. 21 ; 2 Kings vi. 26 f.).

All this was foreign to the outlook of the mono-Yahwists and to the desert tradition. Moses, as we have seen, was influenced and perhaps initiated by the Kenite Jethro (Exod. xviii. 24), but it was a prophetic rather than a priestly ministry that he exercised as the recipient of a special divine revelation from the God of Israel. Therefore, his cultus was incompatible with that of Egypt—the land of bondage—which was based on the divine kingship. Palestine, on the other hand, had been directly under the control of the Pharaohs and it was to the Nile valley that the Canaanite chiefs looked for help in time of need, being themselves vassals of the Egyptian monarch.

Furthermore, since Palestinian civilization was agricultural rather than pastoral, the ancient kingship ritual pattern was more firmly established than among the Aramæan tribes, who were more inclined towards divination and prophecy than to sacrificial worship and vegetation cults. Thus Micah, when he required ministrations, established an ephod instead of building an altar; a priestly interpolator adding significantly, "in those days there was no king in Israel" (Judges xvii. 5 ff.). According to the compiler of the book of Samuel, priest and prophet were combined in the person of Samuel, and it was around the sacred ark that the priesthood developed in Israel.

This sacred object in great measure seems to have taken the place of the divine kingship, since it was identified practically with the Deity Himself. Its presence in the wilderness, for example, was hailed as that of Yahweh. "Rise up, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee. And when it rested he said, Return, O Lord, unto the ten thousands of the thousands of Israel" (Num. x. 35 f.). Similarly, when it came into the camp before the disastrous battle of Aphek, the people shouted with a great shout, and the Philistines were afraid, for they said, "God is come into the camp" (1 Sam. iv. 5–8). So great was its power that to touch it even by accident proved fatal, as in the case of Uzzah (2 Sam. vi. 6 f.), and when it was carried to an alien territory it wrought havoc among gods and men alike, as at Ashdod (1 Sam. v. 3 ff.). It was able to direct its own way home when it was liberated on a new cart prepared for it, and the two cows responsible for its safe return were immediately sacrificed in its honour

(1 Sam. vi. 7 ff.). In short, the ark and Yahweh were practically synonymous terms, both sharing the same divine life, so that on the two occasions when it was ultimately captured the glory was said to have departed from the nation (1 Sam. iv. 22).

According to Hebrew tradition this sacred emblem was attended by Moses and Aaron during the wanderings in the wilderness (Exod. xxxiii. 7–11), and when Joshua was appointed he departed not out of " the tent of meeting " (Exod. xxxiii. 11). Nevertheless, only in one instance (Ps. xcix. 6) is Moses actually entitled priest, and this passage belongs to post-exilic literature. Elsewhere he is always represented as the prophet and law-giver, or, in the Priestly narrative, the human instrument employed in instituting the Aaronic priesthood (Exod. xxviii. ; Lev. viii.), and initiating the sacrificial system at the newly-erected altar.[1]

If we knew what the ark was,[2] and whether it really belongs to the nomad period, we should be well on

[1] It is highly improbable that this account preserves the historical circumstances under which the Levitical order came into being. In tracing the origin of the post-exilic system to Moses, the Priestly writer was merely following a well-established custom in assigning the succession to the most outstanding figure in the tribal lore.

[2] It has been suggested that the ark was an empty throne of Yahweh like the sacred chariot of Zeus (cf. Jer. iii. 16 f.; Herodotus vii. 40), or an image in bull form, but the biblical evidence suggests that it was a chest (or sarcophagus), such as was frequently found a place in Canaanite sanctuaries. Its sacredness probably was derived originally from its contents, but if these were destroyed by the Philistines, a reason is at hand for the emphasis laid upon the sanctity of the actual ark in the later narratives. Cf. Phythian-Adams, *The Call of Israel*, pp. 82 ff.

our way to arriving at a conception of the priesthood in pre-exilic Israel. It may be conjectured, however, that it was oracular rather than sacrificial in purpose, and the principal functions of the priests seem to have been those of guardians of the sanctuaries and interpreters of the divine will. The Hebrew *kōhēn* was primarily a soothsayer and seer, like the Babylonian *barû*, and therefore an organ of revelation. There is no evidence in the Old Testament of ecstatic conditions on the part of the priests in pre-exilic times, oracular divination being practised by means of a specific apparatus, such as the *urim* and the *thummin*, the sacred lots. Probably the art of manipulating the oracle was transmitted by tradition in certain families, and while a sacerdotal caste did not develop till later, the " Levite " priests doubtless claimed some priority before the Exile (cf. Judges xvii. 7–13, xviii. 30). The priests of Shiloh apparently were Levites (1 Sam. i. 3, ii. 34 ; cf. Exod. vi. 25 ; Num. xxv. 7, 11), but the sons of David (2 Sam. viii. 18), and of Nathan (1 Kings iv. 5), a son of Micah (Judges xvii. 5), of Abinadab (1 Sam. vii. 1), as well as Samuel and Joshua (Exod. xxxiii. 11), also exercised priestly functions, before the office was confined to the clan (or guild) of Levi in the ninth century. Under the influence of these various and rival local priesthood connected with certain sanctuaries (Shiloh, Dan, Bethel, Gilgal) Israelite cultus was shaped, and tradition consolidated.

In addition to this organized divination, the individual cult of visionary experience played an important part in the religious life of the nation, as, for example, in the case of seers like Samuel (1 Sam.

ix. 9). With this class of diviner ecstatic conditions were not unknown, as is shown in the account of Saul's encounter with the "prophets" after his search for the asses (1 Sam. x. 10 f.), or in that of the messengers sent by Saul to capture David at Naioth (1 Sam. xix. 18 ff.). These phenomena correspond to the shamanism found frequently among the Ural-Altaic peoples, where highly emotional symptoms are developed, displaying abnormal qualities and occult methods, having for their purpose direct intercourse and communion with the spirit world.[1] It would seem that organized communities of seers of this character living a common life existed in Israel in the time of Elisha (2 Kings iv. 38 ff.; cf. 1 Sam. x. 11), and it may be that it was such a company that Micaiah confronted on the eve of the battle of Ramoth Gilead (1 Kings xxii.).

With the growth of the prophetic movement a reaction set in against the cultus of the "high places," and although Solomon installed the ark in the temple he erected in the royal city, the importance of this new sanctuary was greatly exaggerated by the later writers in their endeavour to suppress the local shrines. Before the Josiah reformation in 622, when it was declared to be the only lawful "place of worship" in Israel, other centres, such as Bethel, Hebron, Dan, and Beersheba, were national sanctuaries served by priests performing an elaborate cultus after the fashion of that which obtained at the Canaanite shrines, and under the patronage of kings who themselves did not hesitate to offer sacrifices therein. Thus, Jeroboam is said to have set up

[1] M. A. Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia* (Oxford, 1914), pp. 169 ff.

images of Yahweh in the form of a bull at Dan and Bethel (1 Kings xii. 32 ff.). Moreover, in the temple at Jerusalem, constructed by Phœnician architects on the plan of the Egyptian temples, sun-worship was practised during the later years of the monarchy (2 Kings xxiii. 11 ; cf. Jer. vii. 18, xliv. 17 ff. ; Ezek. viii. 16), and Dr. Hollis has recently produced evidence in support of his contention that it was built with its axis directed towards the Mount of Olives, because of the sanctity of that site, which he thinks had a solar significance. The Holy of Holies, he believes, rested over the sacred rock, and the axis of Herod's temple was inclined five degrees to the south of that of Solomon's temple and ran at right angles to the eastern limit of the platform of the rock and through the sacred rock, while the altar was on the site of Araunah's threshing-floor.[1] Before the time of Solomon, the autumnal equinox, he suggests, was the occasion of a special sacrifice on the rock called *Sakhra*, where the Mosque of Omar now stands, when the sun rose over the Mount.[2] Into a discussion of this interesting hypothesis, which incidentally follows ancient tradition against the views of most modern scholars, it is impossible to enter here. But although the site and significance of the temple has long been a matter of dispute, there can be no reasonable doubt that its form and contents were alien to Yahwism, and thoroughly syncretistic. Thus, a copper serpent alleged to have been constructed by Moses was removed from it by Hezekiah, and the " brazen sea " supported

[1] F. J. Hollis, *The Archæology of Herod's Temple* (London, 1934), pp. 124 ff.

[2] Hollis, in *Myth and Ritual* (Oxford, 1934), pp. 91 ff.

by four groups of three bulls (2 Chron. iv. 1 ff.) seems to be the Hebrew version of the Babylonian *Apsû* or *Tâmtu* (*i.e.* the abyss of the creation myth), while the twin pillars, Jachin and Boaz, correspond to the two obelisks at the entrance of Egyptian and Phœnician temples.[1]

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the ardent monotheists despaired of the whole ritual situation in Israel, since the religion practised in the temples and shrines was indistinguishable from that of the indigenous and neighbouring cults. It was in reaction to this that the Rechabites (*c.* 850 B.C.) took their stand against Palestinian culture as a whole, and the eighth-century prophets adopted a negative attitude to the entire sacrificial system. Thus, Amos, in looking back to the golden age of the nomadic civilization, asks, " Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel ? " (Amos v. 25). Similarly Hosea in the name of Yahweh proclaims, " I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness : I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first season : but they came to Baal-peor, and consecrated themselves unto that shame : and became abominable like that which they loved " (ix. 10).

For these great religious reformers Yahweh was essentially ethical in His demands as in His nature, and, therefore, to associate with the syncretistic worship of alien deities and foreign systems was an abomination. From time to time attempts were made to break away the nation from their idolatrous

[1] Benzinger, *Hebräische Archæologie*, 3rd Ed. (Leipzig, 1927), p. 329.

allegiances, but without permanent success. Thus on the death of Hezekiah his reforms were immediately swept away by Manasseh, who introduced fresh abuses in the form of child sacrifices to Molech in the valley of Hinnom, in addition to re-establishing the asherah and worshipping "all the host of heaven and serving them" (2 Kings xxi. 1 ff.). The discovery of a law book (probably Deuteronomy, or part of it) during repairs to the temple in the reign of Josiah in 621 led to more drastic reforms which included the wholesale destruction of the high places, and the prohibition of sacrifice outside Jerusalem even to Yahweh. The condemnations of Hosea were now put into effect so far as the localized cultus was concerned, though apparently the Levites were left in possession of the priesthood.[1] In Deuteronomy the emphasis is laid on the centralization of worship, and the condemnation of the cultus of foreign gods, together with the ethical demands of Yahweh which included humanitarian ideals, very much as Amos stressed social justice, and Hosea added love.

Within twelve years of these reforms, however, Josiah fell in battle at Megiddo, and once more a return was made to the old syncretistisms. The pagan rites were restored in the temple so that, if to go to Bethel was to transgress, and to visit Gilgal was to multiply transgression, what was to be said of worshipping at Jerusalem, the newly established central sanctuary? Small wonder, then, if this generation of prophets became pessimistic protestants, who, like Jeremiah, despaired of any communal approach to God.

[1] Cf. pp. 132 ff. for a discussion of the development of the priesthood between 621 and 400 B.C.

Through all the adverse conditions of the unhappy lot of the lonely Jeremiah an intense individualism brought him such religious consolation as he was capable of receiving. Each man must suffer for his own sins and each must be saved by his own righteousness ; a doctrine not very far removed from that which dominated a later reformation.[1]

It was the same attitude of mind that found expression in the condemnations of the sacrificial system : " I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices, but this thing I commanded them, saying, Hearken unto my voice " (Jer. vii. 22). Or, again, " I hate, I despise your feasts, I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings, and meal-offerings, I will not accept them ; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts " (Amos v. 21).

Reformers, however, are always liable to be reactionary and iconoclastic in their endeavours to sweep away abuses, and it is all too easy to undermine the foundations of an institution or a society in the attempt to purify it. Thus, in Christendom the crowded Southern shrines still stand out in marked contrast to the empty Northern benches, as a commentary on the well-intentioned efforts of our own prophets in the sixteenth century. It is easy enough to destroy

[1] In this connexion it is interesting to notice that the promulgation of the Law Book in the reign of Josiah (when Jeremiah began his career) gave rise to a conception of Scripture and moralism which found its counterpart in the Protestant Reformation in Europe in the sixteenth century A.D.

Shiloh and Bethel, but it is exceedingly difficult to establish and maintain a purely subjective ethical worship of a transcendent Deity which embraces more than a few select souls with a particular religious temperament.

The unique achievement in Israel was the emergence in due course of a combination of objective worship with ethical ideals, but this was accomplished only after the nation had passed through the drastic discipline and spiritual experience of the Exile. Both the temple at Jerusalem and the local shrines had first to be destroyed, and the whole congregation sent into a prolonged retreat in Babylonia before the nation was weaned away permanently from its contaminated cultus. Indeed, there is reason to believe that this was not completed till well into the second century B.C., but eventually, as will be shown in the next lecture, the national conception of Yahweh became that of the all-righteous God of the whole earth who was worshipped in the beauty of holiness by the New Israel with a purified sacrificial system.

Chapter VIII

THE RELIGION OF ISRAEL AFTER THE EXILE

In the year 597 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar, we are told, "carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths; none remained save the poorest sort of the people of the land. And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the chief men of the land, carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. And all the men of might, even seven thousand and the craftsmen and the smiths a thousand, all of them strong and apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon" (2 Kings xxiv. 14–16).

In the parallel accounts in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9, 10, and Jer. lii. 28, the numbers vary, but in outline all the references to the Exile agree that Nebuchadnezzar captured the rulers of Judah, leaving behind some of the commoners with Jeremiah among the governing class, while a remnant who had settled in Egypt were subsequently carried off to Babylonia in 586 B.C. It seems that, so long as the temple was still in being, the captives at least felt that their god was in His holy habitation, and however much appearances might be to the contrary, for the devout all was right with the world, though His ways were past finding

out. Thus, Jeremiah, who can hardly be accused of undue optimism, prophesied in the name of Yahweh that " within two full years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of the Lord's house, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away, and I will bring again to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah, that went to Babylon, saith the Lord ; for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon " (Jer. xxviii. 3 f.).

But, alas ! those who remained behind in Palestine continued their former worship at the high places (Jer. vii. 9, 18 ; Ezek. vi. 13), so that " both prophet and priest were profane," and " caused Israel to err " (Jer. xxiii. 11 ff.). Similarly, those who went down into Egypt " burnt incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her " (Jer. xliv. 19), because, they affirmed, since they had abandoned this practice in Judah, they had wanted all things and been consumed by famine and the sword (15 ff.). Therefore, Jeremiah pronounced the judgement of Yahweh upon them : " Behold, I watch over them for evil, and not for good ; and all the men of Judah that are in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by the famine, until there be an end of them. And they that escape the sword shall return out of the land of Egypt into the land of Judah, few in number ; and all the remnant of Judah, that are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall know whose word shall stand, mine or theirs " (27, 28).

From the Aramaic papyri found at Elephantine it is clear that a considerable community of Jewish mercenaries employed on a frontier outpost existed

in Egypt at the time of Ezra with their own temple, priesthood, and ritual. Since this temple was still standing when Cambyses invaded Egypt in 525 B.C., it was the only Jewish sanctuary that existed after the final sack of Jerusalem. But while the worship was directed to *Yahu* (*i.e.* Yahweh), He was assigned female consorts called by such names as Anath-Bethel, Anath-Jahu, Ashim-Bethel, Haran-Bethel, Mesgid.[1] Since these titles refer to a Canaanite goddess, it would seem that we have here confirmatory evidence of the apostasy of the settlers, who must have brought the cult of the queen of heaven with them into the Nile valley. There is also evidence that they adopted the Egyptian deities and contracted mixed marriages. In short, they merely continued the syncretistic tradition of pre-exilic Israel which was so definitely established that they were not regarded as heretical by the religious authorities at Jerusalem.

There is reason, therefore, for Jeremiah's despair of the nation. It is at this point that the curtain falls on his mournful career, the destruction of the temple and the city marking the end of his vision. With the country laid waste and desolate he had nothing further to predict except the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar (xliv.). Ezekiel, the counterpart in Babylonia of Jeremiah, on the other hand, never lost hope, and concentrated all his efforts on the restoration of the nation when the dry bones would be clothed again with flesh, and would once more form the living army of Yahweh (Ezek. xvii. 22–24, xxxvii. 1–14).

[1] Gustav Hölscher, *Die Profeten, Untersuchung zur Religionsgeschichte Israels* (Leipzig, 1914), p. 160.

But, like Jeremiah, he recognized that idolatrous cults must first be put away since these really lay at the root of the catastrophe. If it was syncretistic worship that had brought about the Exile, confusion was made worse confounded by priests and people turning to the gods of Babylon, Marduk and Ishtar, who had proved stronger than Yahweh. "The Lord seeth us not," they cried, "the Lord hath forsaken the earth" (viii. 12). But if the majority in Israel had taken "his idols into his heart," and put "the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face," there was still a faithful remnant to whom estrangement from their land and their God was a terrible punishment. It was they who sat by the rivers of Babylon and wept, hanging up their harps on the willows, when they remembered Zion. To sing Yahweh's song in a strange land was treason and so they proclaimed: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I remember not thee: if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy" (Ps. cxxxvii.).

It was doubtless this devout minority that encouraged Ezekiel to look forward with confidence to the time when the exiles would forsake their idolatrous ways and turn again to Yahweh Who in His mercy and love would restore them to their own land in peace. "A new heart will I give you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes" (xxxvi. 26 f.). When this is accomplished then a new theocracy will be established, with a

new temple, a new ritual order and sacrificial system, all a perfect replica of the worship of heaven.

This Utopian symbolism makes Ezekiel often appear as a pure idealist and theorist remote from the actualities of life (xlvii.–xlviii.). Yet in reality there are few characters in the history of religion who have had a more profound influence. Once Jerusalem was captured, the temple destroyed and the nation driven from its natural home, the old territorial view of Yahweh became impossible. Either the tribal and localized conception of deity must be abandoned, or terms must be made with the victorious gods of Babylonia—Marduk and his pantheon. It was this situation which Ezekiel had to face (xiv. 1–11), and when the Elders of Israel sought his aid he was fearless in his counsel: "Return ye, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations." On the other hand, those who stood firm and refused to have anything to do with the allurements of the temples of their conquerors were inclined to relapse into a negative pessimism (Ps. cxxxvii.), being content to hang up their harps in despair in their inability to sing the Lord's song in a strange land.

Between these two attitudes Ezekiel sought to find a solution of the problem. The Exile, he conceived, was to be regarded as a time of strenuous discipline and regeneration so that out of it might emerge a new conception of the transcendent greatness and holiness of God, and a purified nation capable of approaching Him in an acceptable objective worship in a restored temple. The ritual order will include expiatory sacrifices and a ceremonial law, but the ethical

righteousness of Yahweh demands above all things, and side by side with objective worship, rightness of conduct. There can be little doubt that the great mass of Levitical Laws, known as the Priestly Code (Lev. i.–xvi., xxvii.; Num. i.–x. 28, xv., xvii.–xix., xxvi.–xxxi., xxxiii.–xxxvi.; Exod. xxv.–xxxi., xxxv.–xl.), which belong to the period of Zerubbabel's temple, were largely indebted to Ezekiel for their inspiration, though his actual regulations were much less elaborate.[1] But great as was his work at this critical juncture in the history of Israel, there was another giant who prepared the way for the re-evaluation of the old symbolism in terms of ethical concepts.

Before the labours of Ezekiel could bear fruit the author of chapters xl. to lv. of the composite book called "Isaiah" had to vindicate Yahweh against all rival claims. This prophet, commonly distinguished by the title the "Deutero-Isaiah," arose at the time when Cyrus, after his conquest of the Median and Lydian kingdoms in 549 and 546 B.C. respectively, was about to begin his attack on Babylonia. Thus, he seems to have lived in the reign of Nabonidus (546–538), the last of the Chaldean kings, some twenty years after Ezekiel.[2] For him the Aryan-speaking founder of the Persian Empire (Cyrus) was the divine instrument for the restoration of Israel:

"Keep silence before me, O Islands; and let the peoples renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to

[1] Probably the Law Book read by Ezra (Neh. viii.) 444 B.C. was P, or part of it.

[2] The latest record of Ezekiel is 571 B.C.

judgement: Who hath raised up one from the east, whom he calleth in righteousness to his foot?" (xli. 1, 2). "Thus saith the Lord thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb: that saith of Cyrus, He is my Shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built; and to the temple, thy foundation shall be laid" (xliv. 24, 28 f.).

For Israel's sake shall victory be given to Cyrus, His servant. "Thus saith the Lord to his anointed,[1] to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him, and I will loose the loins of kings; to open the doors before him, and the gates shall not be shut" (xlv. 1 ff.). Before him, therefore, as the agent of Yahweh the Babylonian gods are powerless. "Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth; their idols are upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: the things that ye carried about[2] are made a load, a burden to the weary beast. They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity" (xlvi. 1 f.).

This, however, does not reflect the attitude actually adopted by Cyrus since, so far from debasing the gods of the conquered people, he attributed his victory to Marduk (Bel), and he was most careful to maintain the existing cults in Babylon, Borsippa, and other centres. Even the introduction of Zoroastrianism as the official religion of Persia in the days of Darius I, towards the end of the sixth century B.C., did not materially change conditions in Babylonia,

[1] This is the only place where a foreign king is spoken of as the anointed of Yahweh.

[2] *I.e.* in the processions.

except perhaps in enhancing the position of Marduk as the embodiment of the attributes of all the gods of the pantheon. But this discrepancy between the prediction of the Deutero-Isaiah and the policy of Cyrus places the book just before the overthrow of the Babylonian dynasty in 539, and the return of the Jewish exiles to Palestine in the following year (538).

The belief of the prophet that the destruction of the pantheon was imminent led him to proclaim explicitly and controversially the universal sovereignty of Yahweh as the omnipotent Lord of all the earth in comparison with whom all the gods of the surrounding nations were but idols. "I am the Lord and there is none else, beside me there is no god. I will gird thee, though thou hast not known me: that they may know from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none beside me" (xlv. 5 f.). Hitherto, as we have seen, the prophets had been content to maintain the unique character of Yahweh as the great national jealous God of Israel, controlling for good the destinies of His Chosen People. But with Jerusalem in ruins, and Israel scattered, the territorial doctrine was no longer tenable.

It was this anomaly that fostered an explicit monotheism implicit in the earlier Hebrew prophets, so that at the close of the Exile Yahweh could be equated with the ground of the universe. "Before me there was no god formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am Yahweh; and beside me there is no saviour" (xliii. 10). "For thus saith Yahweh that created the heavens; he is God, that formed the earth and made it; he established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited; I am Yahweh,

and there is none else" (xlv. 18). Therefore, for Him who "hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out the heavens with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust in a balance" (xl. 12 ff.). Yet Israel was still His servant, Jacob whom He had chosen, and the seed of Abraham was His friend. "Thou whom I have taken hold of from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the corners thereof, and said of thee, Thou art my servant, I have chosen thee and not cast thee away; fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea I will help thee; yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (xli. 8–10).

Whether it was the Deutero-Isaiah who developed the conception of the Ideal Servant of Yahweh destined to accomplish through much suffering the mission entrusted to the nation as a whole, is very difficult to say. The prevailing expert opinion at the moment inclines to the view that the four sagas (Isa. xlii. 1–4 (or 1–9); xlix. 1–6 (or 1–13); l. 4–9 (or 4–11); lii. 13–liii. 12) setting forth the exalted picture of the Suffering Servant giving his life a ransom for many, were from the pen of another writer, though, of course, this in no way detracts from their spiritual value. Whether it was Israel as a nation, or an idealized man, who was conceived as stricken of God and afflicted, these superb passages represent the nearest approach in the Old Testament to the Christian doctrine of the Atonement. When it is affirmed that "he was wounded for our transgressions,

he was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed " (Isa. liii. 5 ; cf. 8), suffering is given an atoning value.

Moreover, undoubtedly there is a Messianic tone about such phrases as " I have put my spirit upon him," and " he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles " (xlii. 1), but while we have here a true picture of the Christ of history and religious experience, it scarcely depicts the prevailing Jewish expectations of the greater David, who it was thought was destined to restore the former prosperity of Israel. It would have been fatal to a military campaign if the leader had been despised and rejected of men, and it would never have done for the people to hide as it were their faces from him, and to have esteemed him not. This was recognized by the later Jewish Talmudists who identified the servant with the Messiah, but explained away the references to his death in terms of the " sickness " fallen upon Israel.[1]

It would seem, then, that here we are dealing with a genuine prophecy ; a " Word of God " forcing its way to find expression in lofty prophetic utterance transcending the passing conditions of local events. Whatever may have been the precise occasion in time to which the references belong, they found their perfect fulfilment in the Man of Sorrows who gave His life a ransom for many, and gathered into one the people of God. But the nation had to pass through many vicissitudes before this was accomplished. With the return of the exiles to Palestine the practical

[1] Driver and Neubauer, *The 53rd Chapter of Isaiah according to the Jewish Interpreters* (Oxford, 1877), pp. lxvi. ff.

policy of Ezekiel to establish the kingdom here and now, proved more attractive than the ideal of the Deutero-Isaiah and the author of the Servant sagas, especially as the promises concerning the restoration had not been fulfilled exactly as had been predicted.

To consolidate the nation it became necessary to tighten the outward observance of Judaism, and the Trito-Isaiah (as the post-exilic author of chapters lvi.–lxvi. of Isaiah is commonly called) represented Jerusalem as the centre of the universe whither all peoples of the earth would come (Isa. lxvi. 1–8 ; cf. Ps. lxxxvii.). " Lift up thine eyes round about and see : they all gather themselves together, they come unto thee : My sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be carried in the arms. . . . Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, for the name of the Lord thy God, and for the holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. And strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee : for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy unto thee " (Isa. lx. 4, 9 f.).

The same theme runs through that magnificent allegory the book of Jonah, where a new and widened outlook towards the non-Jewish world is symbolised under the figure of Nineveh, " wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand." If the book of Ruth was re-edited in post-exilic times, it doubtless constituted a protest against the narrow attitude towards mixed marriages adopted by Nehemiah and Ezra (Neh. xiii. 23 f. ; Ezra ix. 1 f.), since

the Moabitess is represented as a " mother in Israel." [1] The spiritual experience of the Exile, in spite of the temporary nationalistic reaction in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, had a widening effect. The earlier prophets and reformers contended against local Baalim and foreign gods, but once Yahweh was established as the only God of all the earth, and Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus proclaimed as His servants and agents, it was no longer possible to maintain the former exclusiveness.

Unlike the Greeks, the Jews never speculated concerning the ultimate principle in and ground of the universe. For them the history of events conceived as a moral order led to an ethical monotheism so that the rise and fall of nations and kingdoms became a revelation of the divine will and purpose of the Lord of all the earth. But a nationalistic monotheism is a contradiction in terms, as the deepest thinkers in all the higher religions were not slow to realize. Thus, the movement initiated in Israel by the Deutero-Isaiah and the post-exilic prophets has its counterpart in Zoroastrianism in Persia, while Socrates, Plato, Confucius, Lao-tse, and Gautama were in their own spheres as far removed from the current polytheism as the Hebrew prophets. But in the case of Judaism it was not as a result of philosophical difficulties about a plurality of Creators that the Israelite leaders were led to postulate a universal Deity. Their monotheism was born not of metaphysical monism but from the conception of a moral

[1] From the concluding verses the purpose of the book is seen to be the setting forth of the genealogy of David in the line of Ruth (iv. 17 ff.).

order and a common good. Their point was not so much that Yahweh was the only God, but that He alone was worthy of worship, or even of recognition. Moreover, just as in earlier times He was regarded as the Lord of the Elohim, so from the Persian period onwards, the Hebrew heaven was as populous as the Greek Olympus. Therefore, an ethical monotheism did not preclude the existence of lesser semi-divine beings, be they angels or demons.

Yet again, it would be a mistake to suppose that syncretistic worship was unknown in the post-exilic community. Thus, the attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 B.C. to hellenize the worship of the temple was not without its attractions for a section of the population (1 Macc. i. 13), though ethical monotheism was sufficiently established to secure the triumph of the Maccabaean revolt against the Seleucid rulers ; a victory which further consolidated Judaism, and even the Diaspora, as a theocracy.

The work of Ezra and his school was perpetuated by the hierarchical system that took the place of the monarchy when the high priest became the spiritual head of the New Israel, embodying all the former glory of the nation, assisted by the family of Aaron with the rest of the tribe of Levi as subordinates. How Aaron came to replace Zadok in the post-exilic community is not explained in the Old Testament. Deuteronomy, as we saw in our last lecture, leaves the whole tribe of Levi in possession of the priesthood. " And if a Levite come from any of thy gates out of all Israel, where he sojourned, and come with all the desire of his mind unto the place which the Lord shall choose ; then he shall minister in the name of the

Lord his God, as all his brethren the Levites do, which stand there before the Lord" (Deut. xviii. 6 f.). But the Jerusalem priesthood contradicted this ruling. "Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the Lord in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren" (2 Kings xxiii. 9). After the fall of the capital, Ezekiel, in drawing up his scheme for the restored worship in the New Israel, deprives all but the descendants of Zadok of sacerdotal functions, and assigns to the Levites the menial tasks of the sanctuary. "But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord. They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall keep my charge" (Ezek. xliv. 15 ff.). Moreover, in addition to the sons of Zadok, "the Levites that went far from me . . . shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the house, . . . they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them." Their inferior position is explained as a result of their former idolatrous connexions with the high places. "They shall not come near unto me to execute the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy place, but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed" because they ministered before their idols (xliv. 10 ff.).

The Holiness Code, on the other hand, assigns the priesthood to the sons of Aaron, and treats the inferior

position of the Levites as a lower order in the hierarchy, comparable to that of a permanent deacon in the Apostolic Succession of the Christian Church (Lev. xxi. 1). It is in this priestly legislation that the office of the high priest first appears (Lev. xxi. 10), and the regulations concerning the festivals further developed. Ezekiel is alone in mentioning the "Prince" (xlv. 7), but he knows nothing of the high priest, thereby showing that the Priestly school represents a later development of the hierarchy than that of the Exile.

Dr. Kennett has made the ingenious suggestion that after the fall of Jerusalem the Jews who remained behind in Palestine appealed to the Aaronite priests ministering at Bethel to exchange Bethel for Jerusalem. To regularize the procedure Joshua, the colleague of Zerubbabel, was made a son or grandson of Seraiah, the last of the Zadokite priests before the Exile. Consequently, by this genealogical fiction the sons of Aaron came to replace the sons of Zadok when the people returned.[1] There are serious critical difficulties, however, in the acceptance of this hypothesis, since it involves placing Deuteronomy a generation later than is customary. Nevertheless, it is probably true that the extension of the priesthood began in Palestine during the captivity.

The kingship survived in theory throughout the period, but it had lost its sacerdotal significance. For a short time in Palestine Zerubbabel, the Davidic Prince, and Joshua, the Priest, exercised dual control. But with the removal of the civil governor the royal line came to an end, and the chief priest became the

[1] *Journal of Theological Studies*, VI, 1905, pp. 161 ff.

highest Jewish official in the land. It was then that he occupied automatically the position vacated by the royal occupant of the throne, and, like the king, he was the only anointed person in the nation (Num. xxxv. 25; Lev. xvi. 32; cf. Exod. xxix. 7; Lev. viii. 12), though later the rite of anointing was extended to all priests (Exod. xxx. 30; cf. 2 Macc. i. 10). Therefore, the high priest speedily assumed the attributes of the divine kingship in a modified form as "the anointed of Yahweh" (Lev. iv. 3, 5, 6; vi. 15), and when the succession was broken temporarily after the expulsion of Jason by the Benjamite Menelaus, at the death of the usurper, it was speedily restored in the Aaronite family of Alkimus (1 Macc. vii. 9; 2 Macc. xiv. 2; Josephus, *Ant.* XX. x. 33). In this way the hierarchy was carried on from generation to generation within the hereditary line of Aaron, the sacerdotal functions reaching their climax in the Day of Atonement observances.

In this connexion it is curious that, notwithstanding the importance assigned to this solemnity in the post-exilic community, it is only once mentioned in the Old Testament. In Leviticus xvi. it is decreed that on the tenth day of the seventh month the high priest "shall make atonement for the holy sanctuary and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar; and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly" (xvi. 33). But the ritual was unknown to Ezekiel, or to Zechariah, who regulated the offerings and fasts in commemoration of national disasters without reference to it (Ezek. xlv. 18 ff.; Zech. viii. 19). Nehemiah mentions a joyous fast on the first day of

the seventh month, and the subsequent celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles (vii. 73–viii), but he makes no allusion to the Day of Atonement. Kennett thinks that it arose as an "annual commemoration of the solemn act of penitence with which the Jewish community under Nehemiah inaugurated a new phase of religion at Jerusalem." [1] It may be that it represents a corporate act of atonement for the syncretistic worship that brought divine vengeance upon the nation, which with a deeper realization of ethical values became the climax of the new sacrificial system.

In the Persian period the ritual and ceremonial laws were revised and expanded, and set forth as a body of religious ordinances delivered by God to Moses in the desert but applicable for all time. Thus, they became the institutions of a universal ethical religion upon which the welfare of Israel and its hopes depended. Something more than ritual holiness was demanded by Yahweh, as is clear from Ps. li., which in its final form belongs to this period, and from the Trito-Isaiah (Isa. lix.; lvii. 3–13; lv. 1–7; lxvi. 3, 17).

But notwithstanding the efforts of post-exilic Judaism to consolidate the nation as a priestly theocracy devoted exclusively to the ethical worship of Yahweh as the only God of all the earth, the struggling new state with its meagre temple was a poor substitute for the greatness and glory Israel enjoyed under David and Solomon; and hope predicted that its former prosperity would be restored (Zech. iii. 8–iv.; Joel iii. 21). The rise of an ideal monarchy ruled over by a new Davidic king filled with the spirit and

[1] *Old Testament Essays* (Camb., 1928), pp. 109 ff.

power of Yahweh, goes back to the troublous days before the Exile, if the great evangelical passage in Isa. ix. (1–7) belongs to that time.[1] "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder." Zechariah and Haggai urged the rebuilding of the temple in order that the Messiah might come (Zech. iii. 8–iv.; Hag. ii. 6 ff.). But it was a temporal ruler like Zerubbabel that was conceived as the "righteous branch" who was destined to bring about the long-expected deliverance. As these hopes were unfulfilled, men's minds began to turn towards a direct supernatural intervention from heaven ushering in the birth at Bethlehem of the Davidic king who would reign over the new kingdom. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are of old from everlasting" (Mic. v. 2).

Again, the success of the Maccabaean revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes seems to have revived the notion of a personal Messiah who should be a greater leader than Simon Maccabaeus, and carry on his work to victory. Some thought that the world-age was about to break-up, and with the general collapse of all human kingdoms the divine rule would be established, very much as to-day apocalyptic speculations are rife among the credulous. But behind Jewish eschatology there was a definitely religious development, influenced perhaps in some measure by Persian thought. The unsatisfying vague Sheol-doctrine of the hereafter

[1] A Maccabaean date, however, has been suggested for the prophecy. Cf. *Journal of Theological Studies*, VII, pp. 321 ff.

fostered by the earlier monoYahwists, gave place to a belief in a corporeal resurrection of the righteous (notably probably those who suffered in the Seleucid persecution), who will rise from the grave with their bodies to take part in the glorious Messianic reign on earth ; while the wicked awake to shame and everlasting contempt (Dan. xii. 1 ff.).[1]

In some of the Apocalypses the earthly rule of the Messiah is only preliminary to the final judgement and the setting up of the heavenly kingdom. Again, sometimes he appears as the divine agent in the introduction of the new era, and at other times his appearance is reserved for the final stage when the victory has been won. In Daniel and the book of Enoch, the angelic-prince, who is apparently equated with Michael, became invested with Messianic attributes as the " righteous one " (Dan. vii. 13 ff. ; cf. Enoch xxxviii. 2, liii. 6), and God's anointed (Enoch xlviii. 10, lii. 4). Hence " the Christ " as the Greek equivalent in the Septuagint of the Hebrew *Māshiâh.*

The belief in the pre-existence of this apocalyptic Figure assumes to some degree his transcendental nature (Apoc. Ezra xiii. 52, xiv. 9 ; Enoch xlv. 1 ff., lxii. 7). Thus, the way is opened for his being assigned a creative function as the Maker and Preserver of the world. Here, however, we are faced with the problem of later Jewish thought after it had come into contact with the mind of Greece. In the Wisdom literature, and in the writings of Philo of Alexandria, a new philosophical outlook appears which seems to reflect

[1] Or possibly as an object of shame and contempt because they were denied a resurrection.

the Hellenic environment in which it occurs. Thus, a Platonic conception of immortality finds expression in the book called the Wisdom of Solomon, the Greek belief in the pre-existence and survival of the *psyche* taking the place of the apocalyptic resurrection of the body.

Similarly, in interpreting the divine power manifested in the universe, the Word of God is spoken of as His efficient agent in a personalized quality of Wisdom. Thus, in Ecclesiasticus Wisdom is a personified divine attribute "created from the beginning before the world," having her abode in the tabernacle in Sion and inspiring the Law (Torah) (xxiv.). The concept seems to be equated with the female principle in nature as the creatrix of all things as well as the ground of the universe who bestowed on Solomon the gift of learning and guided the course of history (Wisd. vii. 17). In an important manuscript, which the author has kindly allowed me to see in the course of construction and to mention in this connexion,[1] Canon W. L. Knox has produced evidence which suggests that this concretely personal or mythological figure of Wisdom in Judaism had a marked affinity with the Ishtar-Isis Mother Goddess, who at this time (*i.e.* second century B.C. and onwards) was swallowing up the local female deities of the ancient cities, either by superseding them or by being identified with them.

Since in Judaism there was no room for a goddess,

[1] The work in question is on St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, and when it is published it will be found to contain a most suggestive analysis of the evidence upon which the hypothesis is based.

the vacant place, it is suggested, was taken by Wisdom as the mother of the universe and the sum and personification of the divine nature, identified with the divine revelation contained in the Torah, and brought into relation with the waters of Paradise. Even Philo could not break away from this cosmic conception of Wisdom in enunciating his theory of the Logos in terms of the Stoicism of the school of Posidonius. The four rivers of paradise he makes spring from Eden, the wisdom of God, whose sole delight is in God.[1] These water the entire cosmos and make glad the city of God, filling human souls with the divine Word.[2] Indeed the cosmos seems to be the result of the union of the Creator with Wisdom, "the mother through whom the whole was accomplished."[3] In view of the place occupied by the Mother Goddess in the Græco-Roman world where the Jews of the Dispersion dwelt, this is a bold conception, and Canon Knox may well be correct in thinking that Philo as a Jew would not have ventured to adopt the figure unless he had a well-established precedent for the analogy in Jewish tradition.

In the *Similitudes* of Enoch the Son of Man is a revealer of wisdom (Eth. Enoch xxxvii–lxxi), and when for more reflective minds the purpose and operations of God in creation, in history, and in revelation were given objective existence in Wisdom and the Word, under the exigencies of a transcendent idea of God, as in Philo, these personified qualities

[1] *De Somn.*, 2, 37.

[2] Cf. *De Prof.*, 18. *Quod. Det. Pot. Ins.*, 31, 16. *Leg. Alleg.*, 2, 21.

[3] *De Ebr.*, 8.

approximate to hypostasis. At this point the bridge uniting Greek philosophical thought with Jewish theology was crossed, but the Hebrew mind did not move readily in this direction, and even the Diaspora were singularly little affected in their religious and philosophical outlook by their Hellenic environment. It was not until Christian influences had become established that Origen, in a later period, following the Fourth Evangelist, derived the universe of becoming, change and dissolution from the Logos who was generated before the earth was created (Prov. viii. 22 ff.), the express image of God (Heb. i. 3; Wisd. vii. 25 f.), and therefore of the same essence with Him (ὁμοούσιος); distinct yet not separate, like the sun and its rays. He is the firstborn of all creation, and in Him were created all things, visible and invisible (Col. i. 15 ff.).

The achievement of Judaism in supplying the background of this Faith lies in the maintenance of an ethical conception of monotheism as the official religion of the nation against the prevailing polytheism, both within the community and in the neighbouring cultures. All the conflicts of dualistic divinities, the orgiastic fertility cults of the Mother Goddess, the animistic worship of stocks and stones, and the propitiation of the dreaded demons of the dark and waste places of the earth, eventually were either eliminated or re-evaluated in terms of lofty spiritual concepts. The main light thus shone more purely and powerfully till all shadows of lesser deities were fled away, and by the time the last book of the Old Testament was admitted into the Canon, the Jews

had reached a stage of religious development that fully justified the Psalmist's assertion: "Yahweh hath not dealt so with any nation."

Apart from the conclusion that in this phenomenon we are dealing with a self-disclosure of the Deity to the receptive leaders of a peculiar people, the only explanation is that it constitutes an accident of history. This latter argument is hardly convincing inasmuch as the Hebrews drew the whole of their material culture from the great civilizations that surrounded them—Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, the Hittites, Crete, and to a limited extent, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The only thing in which they showed any real originality was in their religion, and here they made a contribution to the world which will ever give them an assured position in the ethical and spiritual sphere, and more particularly since from this stock there arose in the fullness of time One who has vindicated His claim to be at once the light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of His people Israel.

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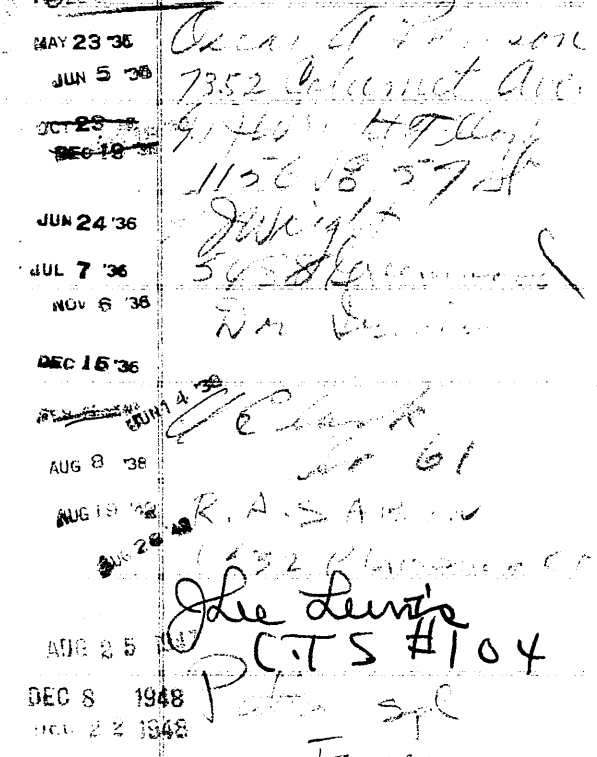

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